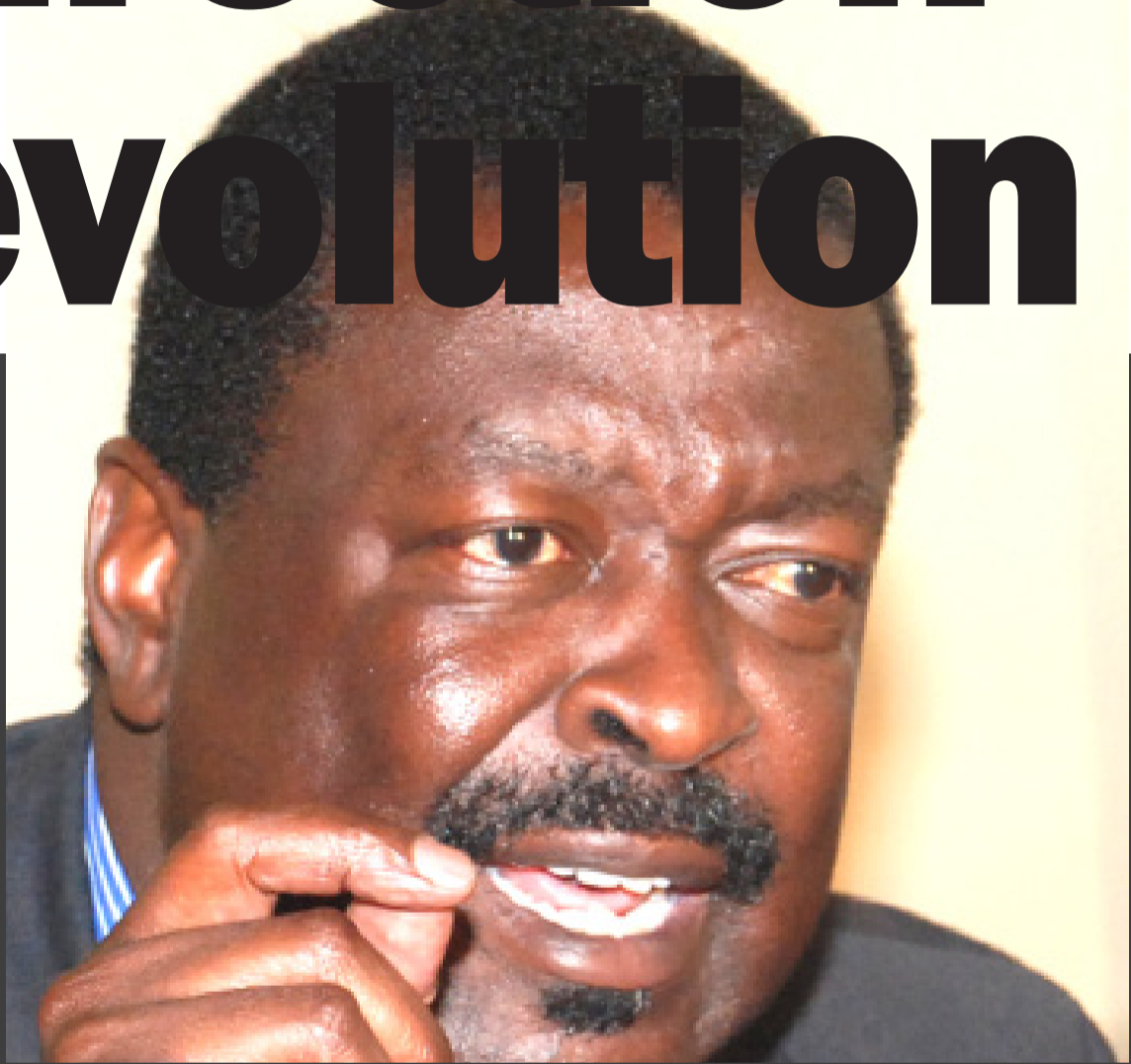


No direction on devolution



...as Mudavadi team throws back to the people crucial decisions

By GIDEON OCHANDA

THE Task Force on devolution created by the Ministry of Local Government has thrown back a raft of recommendations to the people without fixing firm positions for improvement.

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Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Local Government Musalia Mudavadi.

Severe drought forces closure of schools

By MALACHI MOTANO

A PROLONGED drought ravaging the northern Kenyan towns of Garissa and Wajir has interrupted a unique education system that was enabling the children of the nomadic community to learn while on the move with their livestock.

“Until June last year, while the region had enough pasture and water, pastoralist children from northern Kenya’s Somali community were enrolled in mobile schools that followed their families from one grazing area to another.”

“Two teachers, with books and a

small blackboard loaded onto camels would move with the nomadic herding families through the region’s arid, dusty plains. The mobile school accommodated the traditions and customs of the pastoralists while ensuring children did not grow up illiterate.”

Since June, however, extended

periods of drought in Kenya’s northern grazing areas, brought on by the effects of climate change, have forced many pastoralist children to miss school.

In September, mobile schools operating in areas with shallow wells and dams had to close due to a lack of

water and pasture and by November, all mobile schools were closed down as the drought intensified, drying up boreholes and forcing pastoralists to move across the border to Somalia in search of pasture.

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No direction on devolution

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The Task Force whose mandate was to propose implementation mechanisms for the devolved system of government as outlined in the Constitution has only succeeded in planning numerous alternatives and comparative theoretical basis of Constitutional Provisions.

It has left the real task to the people in as much as there is risk of time and no clear directions of their next engagement with the public.

Real concerns and issues such as Provincial Administration, Local Authorities, current devolved funds, relations between the two governments, public resources, service delivery among others are not clearly placed in the report in a manner that can offer policy and legislative directions (See special report on Page 14 and 19).

Some of the recommendations include:

- Over ten bills required to actualize the devolved governments, key among them the Transition Bill, Assets and Liabilities Bill and the Intergovernmental Relations Bill.
- Employees of local authorities dissolved in the new dispensation to remain in office and the chief officers to report directly to the County Executive
- Officials performing national functions according to the Constitution to report to the national government while those performing County functions to report to the Governor
- The Ministry of State for Public Service (MoSPS) to initiate a process to address the anticipated restructuring of public service to reflect the needs of the national government after the devolution of functions
- The ministry should also undertake a projection of human resource requirements for counties
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Local

Government to undertake a thorough audit of staff of each LA to ascertain their numbers and skills

- The government to set up a body whose primary objective is to oversee the transition process. The body is to also audit assets and liabilities of local authorities and ensure appropriate registers for all identified assets.

- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Local Government and the Transition Authority to be involved in decisions on the initial county budgets.

- The urban municipalities are to be categorized into three, those with at least 300,000 (large) and above; between 50,000 and 299,999 (Medium) and those between 30,000 and 49,000 (small). The first two will provide similar services depending on their capacity, while the last category can provide minimal services as delegated by the County government

- Formation of joint committees

and joint authorities to facilitate cooperation at both levels and inter county coordination during the utilization of trans county shared natural resources (forests, game reserves, rivers, lakes), sharing of existing assets in the provincial headquarters and developing of joint infrastructure projects (Water and roads projects).

- The Provincial Administration to be restructured and named the national administration with a clear mandate to promote national cohesion and integration, disaster management and mitigation, arbitration of disputes and civil registration among other functions.

Clearly these are vague generalities that require formation of further implementation task forces to act on before Kenyans can get credible guidelines on how to transcend from the current centralized system of government to the devolved one as enshrined in the new supreme law.

AGRA funds finger millet research

By TITUS MAERO

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

The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) Managing Director (MD) Dr Ephraim Mukisira said the funds would be used in the next four years after which an evaluation will be done for a possible extension of the programme. He said AGRA and McKnight Foundation supports Agriculture Integrated programmes which are aimed at injecting changes in the finger millet production in the Eastern part of Africa.

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

He was speaking at the Kakamega KARI regional offices during the launching ceremony of McKnight and AGRA funded Finger millet and Legumes projects which was attended by stakeholders drawn from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

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

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

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

Mukisira outlined challenges facing the production of the crop in Kenya as diseases, poor post harvest systems, weeds, competition from other crops, low government priority and limited resources attention including lack of processing equipments adding that with research and enabling policy environment the crop has great potential for expansion.

Mukisira said KARI provides full support for increased finger millet research through combination methods and cutting edge science and engagement of African countries in scientific research to assist increase the crop diversification and income among small holder farmers. He said KARI finger millet agenda centers on breeding for yields, intrinsic good storage ability and insects resistance and through hybrid programme by using biotechnology tools and markets.

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

Severe drought forces closure of schools

From page 1

"We put on a brave face after some of our livestock left for Somalia and others perished here right in front of us," said Hassan Guhad, a community elder for a pastoralist group in Meri, a remote settlement in Wajir.

"The school continued through July and August but we finally decided to close it down as community members fled to urban areas while others moved with their livestock to Somalia. This severe drought has put a stop to the school and the teachers have left the area too," Guhad added.

The region's communities are accustomed to the regular droughts that occur in the region between June and August, before the rains come from September to December. They traditionally prepare for the drought during the rainy season but the latest dry spell extended through the 2010 rainy season and has yet to break. The drought and extreme heat experienced in the day has dried out vegetation and dried up water wells.

The mobile school system began in 2008 after Frontier Indigenous Network, a community based organization in Wajir, convinced community leaders that secular education was vital for their children and a key to prosperity and ambition.

In northern Kenya's Somali community - where each nomadic group comprises seven households with one leader who directs the group's affairs - it is traditional for children to herd goats and donkey.

Leaders had always been reluctant to send their children to school in the region's main towns, meaning young people grew up illiterate with few prospects and young girls were traditionally married off to elders in exchange for a dowry of 10 camels and several goats and sheep. While this practice still happens, education is beginning to change the community's attitudes to women.

Thanks to mobile schools, many



Children attending an ECDE class, a mobile school in the desert. Photo/Malachi Motano

pastoralist children have completed primary education and gone on to secondary school in the towns of northern Kenya.

In the mobile schools, local teachers, who understand English and the local Somali language, use various traditional teaching aids in the remote grazing areas to help the children grasp their lessons.

"We use wild fruits when teaching them mathematics so that they can understand mathematical terms like minus, plus and numbers," said Ali Abdi, a mobile school teacher in the remote town of Sarif, in Wajir district.

If no wild fruits are available, the children will count cattle and camels to understand mathematics.

"During my first teaching ses-

sion, I spoke in the local Somali language but the children took time to understand me. But when I used wild fruits they understood the lesson a lot quicker, so since then I've used wild fruits in my lessons," Abdi added.

To fit in with the rhythm of the nomadic communities, mobile schools start teaching in the early hours of the morning. The children then tend to their goats and donkeys and classes resume in the evening.

"The two learning sessions were meant to respect the community tradition of children participating in herding goats and sheep," said Asha Mulki, coordinator of the mobile school programme at the Frontier Indigenous Network.

"Also, we have understood that

the space between the two sessions gives the children time to reflect and discuss the lessons while out in the grazing areas," she added.

The disruption of the mobile school means pastoralist children have not had lessons since November 2010. Mulki said she hoped the mobile schools would be back up and running again this year, weather permitting, although rains are not expected until later in the year.

"Community members will come back to grazing areas and resume their pastoral lives if we get good pasture and rainfall. But if the situation continues like this we don't know when the school will resume. It all depends on the weather and rain," Mulki said.

Knut demands leave allowance for members

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) wants the Government to introduce a leave allowance for teachers, as it is the case with other civil servants.

Knut Acting Secretary General Osiany Okuta said the allowances should be factored in this year's National Budget to avoid any confrontation.

"We shall resort to demonstrations if the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Uhuru Kenyatta does not factor our request in the Budget," said Okuta.

Okuta and the Kakamega County Secretary John Wesonga said Education Minister Sam Ogeri should advise Uhuru to give teachers leave allowance by July.

Okuta said that the union has written a letter to Teachers Service Commission (TSC) demanding that the allowances be calculated in line with the various job groups.

"All civil servants who include the police earn leave allowance. Why not teachers," posed Okuta who was speaking in Butere.

Okuta said the letter copied to the Minister for Education and his PS James Ole Kiyapi and Treasury also demands that the over 18,000 teachers hired on contract last year be absorbed on permanent terms by July this year.

He explained that the union would not accept more teachers to be employed this year if some will remain casuals.

The two said it is unfortunate that principals will soon start earning over Kshs120,000 whereas teachers serving as interns will stagnate at Kshs15,000 per month.

The secretary general added that the union is also advocating for the scrapping of the Teacher Training College P1 certificates.

Okuta and Wesonga said entry



Knut officials in solidarity.

qualifications for the P1 have been raised to C plain adding that the holders of the document should be awarded Diploma certificates.

The union officials added that Proficiency Teacher Courses (PTC) were not serving their purposes as there are many teachers earning promotions irregularly.

"There is no merit in some promotions as some teachers with all the qualifications have stagnated in one position while others who were employed recently are in better job groups," said Wesonga.

And, Housing Minister Soita Shitanda has made changes at his Malava Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee with former area MP Nathan Anaswa being appointed new chairman.

Anaswa replaced John Tande

while the secretary Wynce Murchuma was substituted by a retired teacher, Francis Makola.

The CDF committee has been in the spotlight after it emerged that there were irregularities during the awarding of bursaries to university students.

The outgoing officials were accused of awarding bursaries to undeserving students. Over 50 students from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology had protested over the matter.

The students had been locked out forcing the minister to intervene.

Shitanda, who is the Malava MP, resolved to replace the two officials for failing in their work.

Anaswa said he is waiting for the National Constituency Develop-

ment Board (NCDB) and the Planning Minister Wycliffe Oparanya to gazette his team.

Anaswa, speaking in Malava town, said he had accepted the appointment and that he was ready for the task. Kenya Sugar Board director Ewing Mwombe also backed the decision by Shitanda.

Shitanda said he wants transparency in the management of CDF matters to curb complains. He said devolved funds should be used as per the regulations of the Act to avoid disputes.

Mwombe said there was need for accountability in the management of the funds.

He added that it was unfair for students from needy families to be locked out yet they are pursuing university education.

Varsities may phase out some courses

By TITUS MAERO

PLANS are underway to phase out degree programmes which are not responsive to the market needs.

The Commission for Higher Education (CHE) Vice Chair Professor Judith Bahemuka says that University senates have been asked to identify academic programmes that are not responsive to the market to pave way for the exercise.

She says that the commission was acting in pursuit of recommendations by the Public Universities Inspection Board (PUIB).

Bahemuka said the PUIB report follows public outcry 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 to respond 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 students 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.

The scholar, however, expressed regret that while university education has continued to expand with the opening up of new universities, constituent colleges and 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.

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.

Intel Corp boosts e-learning in schools

By HENRY OWINO

INTEL Corporation is collaborating with the Ministry of Education and various stakeholders in the education sector to provide computers and other equipment for e-learning to all schools in Kenya.

The programme, known as Intel Education Project for Transformation, will include conducting workshops for teachers in various parts of the country to acquaint them with new technology.

Intel Corporate Affairs and Strategic Alliance Director for Africa Eng Joseph Nsengimana said the collaboration with the Kenyan government is another step forward in meeting the growing demand for education.

Eng Nsengimana said that the

collaboration has already seen the launch of a program that aims at training teachers throughout Kenya on how to use technology to teach.

He added that it has also provided the global development alliance incorporating Intel, USAID, Microsoft, Cisco and the Kenyan government that established the Accelerated 21st Century Education project which will create one-to-one e-learning classrooms in 60 focus schools across Kenya.

"It is the company's firm belief that every learner deserves a quality education that prepares him or her to succeed in life.

That is why Intel has invested over a billion US dollars in the last decade in helping teachers to teach, students to learn and uni-

versities to innovate," said Eng. Nsengimana.

In his keynote address while opening the two days workshop in a hotel in Nairobi, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Prof James Ole Kiyapi said harnessing the combined potential of high speed connectivity and technology in the education sector will help government achieve its objective in the education sector in line with the Vision 2030 blueprint.

"We have taken significant steps to transform our education system and make it responsive to job market dynamics through collaboration with specialists in the private sector like Intel Corporation," said Prof. Kiyapi.

He said while most teachers

will have to undergo training on use of new technology, those who already have module skills only need to upgrade their standards.

Prof. Kiyapi added that solid education provides learners with the tools and knowledge to develop innovative ideas and gives them the foundation they need to succeed in life and to contribute to the development of their countries.

He reiterated that it is important for governments to find solutions that make education relevant, accessible, empowering and affordable.

Intel Kenya Country Manager Mr. Omar Bajaber lauded the increased collaboration with the Ministry and other sectors to achieve better education standards.

NCIC wants quota system reviewed

THE National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) intends to enter into collaboration with the Ministry of Education to carry out civic education on ethnic relations in schools.

NCIC chairman Mzalendo Kibunjia said the civic education will help to inculcate a culture of tolerance to diversity and encourage inter-ethnic cooperation through the school curriculum.

Speaking to journalists in Nairobi, the NCIC chairman said there is need to promote equality of opportunity, good relations and peaceful coexistence among children of different ethnic and racial backgrounds in schools.

Dr. Kibunjia said the Ministry of Education is a major stakeholder in promoting national cohesion and integration in Kenyan schools and a partnership would help the Commission to achieve its agenda.

Among the objectives that NCIC aims to achieve within three years of its collaboration with the Ministry is a review of the quota system, encourag-

ing integration and cohesion by sponsoring school debates, drama and music festivals and elimination of all forms of discrimination on ethnic, racial and religious grounds.

The Commission also intends to lobby for the integration of national values in school curriculum from primary to university level.

“Our education system is a key pillar in promoting social equality and responsibility, respect for and development of Kenya’s rich and varied culture, international consciousness and fostering positive attitude towards other nations as well,” Dr Kibunjia.

Dr. Kibunjia said efforts to foster patriotism and national unity failed with the introduction of the quota system in secondary school admission and the classification of schools at the district level.

He reiterated that education should enable learners to interact with each other and learn to tolerate and appreciate the differ-

COMMENT

By HENRY OWINO

ences in their cultures.

“Learners from one region of the country should be given the opportunity to go to school in another region. That way we would be able to get rid of stereotypes about other communities,” Dr Kibunjia said.

The chairman of the NCIC said education and training should inculcate patriotism and nationalism without compromising responsibility on global issues.

He said the classification of schools at the district level was introduced in the 1980s and stipulates that provincial schools should admit 85 per cent of their students from their localities.

A child born, bred and educated in local schools and post-primary institutions was unlikely to experience the rich social-cul-

tural diversity that the country offers, he argued.

“We cannot wish for national cohesion and integration when our education system goes contrary to the wishes and aspirations of the people. We as NCIC propose a review of the quota system,” Dr Kibunjia said.

According to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Prof James Ole Kiyiapi, the idea of quota system was meant to balance admission to the limited places in national schools.

“The Ministry came with the quota system to allow the admission of students from remote areas who perform well but cannot be admitted to national schools yet if given better learning conditions and facilities can perform excellently,” Prof. Ole Kiyiapi said adding that national schools represent the face of Kenya.

He welcomed the NCIC proposal to involve his Ministry in the fight against negative ethnicity but said the inclusion of cohesion and integration in the curricu-



Dr. Kibunjia

ulum of schools was the mandate of the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) which is in charge of curriculum.

But Prof. Ole Kiyiapi assured NCIC that all the proposals will be looked into as long as they promote national harmony. Teachers were also urged to be good role models to learners since the power of mentorship is one of the Ministry’s mandates.

Give headteachers IT skills — Knut

By JOEL JUMA

A TEACHERS union has challenged the Government to embark on training programmes that will equip headteachers with Information Technology (IT) skills.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) warned that many candidates sitting for this year’s national examinations may not be registered due to poor IT skills among the head-teachers.

“Head teachers are not sure if Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) received details of their candidates after sending them from cyber cafes,” said the Knut Western Provincial Council Secretary John Wesonga.

Wesonga said the council should countercheck registration details to avoid locking out some students.

The union official, who was speaking to the press in Mumias town, also faulted the Government for giving conflicting directions over the registration process.

He said some heads suffered while registering their candidates on-line.

The council’s public relations officer Ken Ramani was recently reported to have said head-teachers were free to register their candidates manually.

Ramani asked head-teachers to



A section of headteachers in a workshop.

Photo/File

forward their details to the district education offices.

Kenya Primary Schools Headteachers Association, on its part, urged the Government not to punish members who fail to register candidates for this year’s national examinations.

The association’s western branch

secretary David Ikinza said some members are not IT compliant.

Kakamega Central District Education Officer Mabale Indiatsi however said education officers are willing to assist head teachers to register their candidates.

“Those who have problems should come forward so that they can

be assisted,” said Indiatsi who was speaking at Kakamega High School.

Indiatsi said it was unfortunate that at this day and age some head teachers were still not conversant with IT skills.

“Computer skills are being used worldwide. Head-teachers have no reason to be left out,” said Indiatsi.

Mudavadi assures on quality education

By TITUS MAERO

THE Deputy Prime Minister Musalia Mudavadi has reaffirmed government’s commitment to provide quality education through training and research at all levels of learning.

Mr. Mudavadi said in the recent past, the education sector has undergone reforms in order to address the overall goals of the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) for Empow-

erment and Wealth Creation (EWC).

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

Enumerating the major reforms the education sector has achieved, the

DPM cited the implementation of the Free Secondary School Education and Free Primary Education which he said are major milestones in the reform process.

The Minister singled out Development Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on Policy Frame Work 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 noted that the development and implementation of the Kenya Education Sector Programme (KESSP) has allowed different stakeholders to support the education sector.

Mudavadi commended teachers of Chavakali Boys Secondary School which posted good results in last year’s Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Exam.

ADB funds Busia schools

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

AFRICAN Development Bank (ADB) has granted Kshs27.5 Million to five secondary schools in Busia County to assist in the construction of laboratories and classrooms.

The beneficiaries are Odiado, Nasira, Bumala Anglican Church, Osieko and Kisoko Secondary schools. The latter will however spend its share of Kshs5million to put up a dormitory.

According to the Busia District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (DQASO) Parmenas Oendo, the funds will be utilised in the construction of laboratory and classrooms in four of the schools which have been allocated Kshs4.5 Million each.

Kisoko Girls Secondary School in Nambale, he explained, had been allocated more funds than the other four to build an ultra modern dormitory.

At a recent interview in his office, Mr Oendo said the bank had given a further Kshs900,000 to each of the schools to facilitate the construction of sanitary facilities.

Thanking the ADB management for its generous gesture, the Busia District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer who is also the project manager, disclosed that all the money had been wired to special accounts opened for the five schools.

He also revealed that tendering for the process adding that bids were being received at the District Procurement Office.

Nyagah urges TSC to computerize its services

By JOEL JUMA

Co-operatives Minister Joseph Nyagah has called on Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to computerize its services to curb delays while remitting contributions to societies.

Nyagah said delays are largely caused by lack of an efficient and effective computer system.

The Minister noted that he had talked to Education Minister Sam Ongeru over the matter to avert a strike by teachers following delays to remit over Kshs3 billion to their societies.

Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) issued a strike notice due to the delays. Knut acting secretary general Okuta Osiany said teachers would down their tools to protest over the matter.

Speaking at a meeting with Kakamega Teachers Savings and Credit Cooperative Society (Kateco), the Minister said cooperatives should not be subjected to financial problems due to inefficiencies at TSC.

Kateco chairman Joseph Sagalla and chief executive officer Peter Vuhya said Government should enhance efficiency to enable teachers access their money.

The two said societies have money that teachers can use in times of emergencies unlike in other financial institutions where there are long procedures.

Sagalla and Vuhya also petitioned the Government to allow societies to disburse funds meant for women and youth projects. They regretted that some youths and women are unable to access the funds because they lack skills on investment.

"Our societies train members and also educate them time to time on how to use the money after applying for loans. This is not the same with the Ministry of Youths Affairs," said Sagalla.

Nyagah who was accompanied by



Students in a computer class. Mr. Nyagah has called on TSC to computerize its services.

the Commissioner of Cooperatives Fred Odhiambo and the Western Provincial Cooperative Officer Nathan Mukhweso promised that the matter would be addressed at the ministerial level.

"I will take up the matter at the Cabinet level so that we use societies to disburse such funds," said Nyagah.

And, an assistant minister has backed a demand by Kenya Union of Post Primary Education of Teachers (Kuppet) that the Government should advertise teaching vacancies.

Gender and Children Affairs assistant Manyala Keya said Parliamentary Committee on Education should not allow teachers to be employed secretly.

"We need to make the chances known so that applicants can channel their applications to schools of their choice for favourable competition," said Keya, who is the Lurambi MP.

Keya explained that it would be unfair for some candidates to be locked out on the grounds that they were not aware of the vacancies.

He said Education Minister Sam Ongeru should advise the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to advertise vacancies in the counties.

Various schools in Kakamega County have put up advertisements locally indicating that they are seeking new teachers.

Most have placed advertisement on notice boards in markets and education offices. They include Buchifi, Bulimbo, Shikomari and Shikoti secondary schools.

Keya who was speaking during the distribution of Constituency Development Fund cheques in Navakholo division said Ongeru should move in with speed and halt secret employment.

Keya gave Kshs150, 000 to Na-

tunyi primary school for construction of toilets and another Kshs200, 000 to Emukabi AP Camp for roofing of the facility.

Kakamega Central District Education Officer Isaac Mabale Indiatasi said the Government was only replaces cases affected by natural causes such as deaths and retirement.

"We are simply replacing. The number of teachers required are few to warrant an advertisement," said Indiatasi.

Kuppet National Chairman Akello Misori and the union's national treasurer Njenga Mwethi petitioned the Government to advertise the vacancies. The two explained that teaching was a profession, whose affairs should not be handled secretly.

Kuppet members want to be represented in the School Boards during the hiring exercises to avert any cases of nepotism and corruption.

Ministry moves to equip schools

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE government has set aside Sh980 million to equip schools in all the 210 constituencies in the country.

Basic education PS James Ole Kiyiapi said part of the money would be used to buy 300 computers in each constituency to promote ICT integration in learning and teaching.

The PS also said that the Ministry was in the process of installing multimedia laboratory projects in 240 secondary schools.

Prof Kiyiapi, who was speaking at Mayori Secondary school in Mbeere South District during a prize giving day, urged schools to adopt use of ICT to drive teaching and learning process.

"I expect all schools to put this huge government investment into good use in content delivery by making ICT a way of life," he said.

The PS said more money had been allocated to improve infrastructure in schools under the economic stimulus scheme.

Each constituency, he said, has received Sh30 million to create a centre of excellence and a further Sh7 million to cater for two model primary schools.

Prof Kiyiapi noted that the free day secondary school had seen enrolment in secondary schools rise from 1.03 million students in 2007 to 1.6 million this year. Some Sh43 billion had been disbursed to secondary schools to cater for the free tuition so far.

He, however, discouraged schools from buying expensive gifts to entice students to work hard terming the practice a reverse motivation.

"Students should never be bribed to work hard. The Ministry of Education does not encourage such," he said adding that learning was the only business students have in schools.

Varsities urged to intensify HIV research

By TITUS MAERO

THE Commission for Higher Education (CHE) Vice Chair Professor Judith Bahemuka has challenged universities in the country to intensify research on HIV/Aids.

Prof. Bahemuka urged the institutions of higher learning to step up such research on the 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 with a

view of finding a lasting solution to the disease.

"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 creation 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 people who are infected and affected by the disease and to mitigate the economic effects of the epidemic.

Prof Bahemuka said the Code of Kenya National HIV/Aids Strategic Plan includes a Multi Sectoral Approach to encourage advocacy, building partnerships and mainstreaming of HIV programmes 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.

Prof. Bahemuka noted that the government established policy guidelines for the HIV/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 disease.

She said the health sector is one of the key components that appeals to the



Prof. Bahemuka

equity and social-economic agenda enshrined in the pillar of the country's economic blueprint thus vision 2030.

Task force on education reforms formed

By MORRIS GITHENYA

REFORMS expected in the education sector are meant to improve standards in accordance with the new constitution.

A task force appointed by the government is visiting various parts of the country collecting information that will inform the reforms envisaged in the constitution.

Education Permanent Secretary James Ole Kiyiapi said the views will be scrutinised by the experts before a final report is compiled.

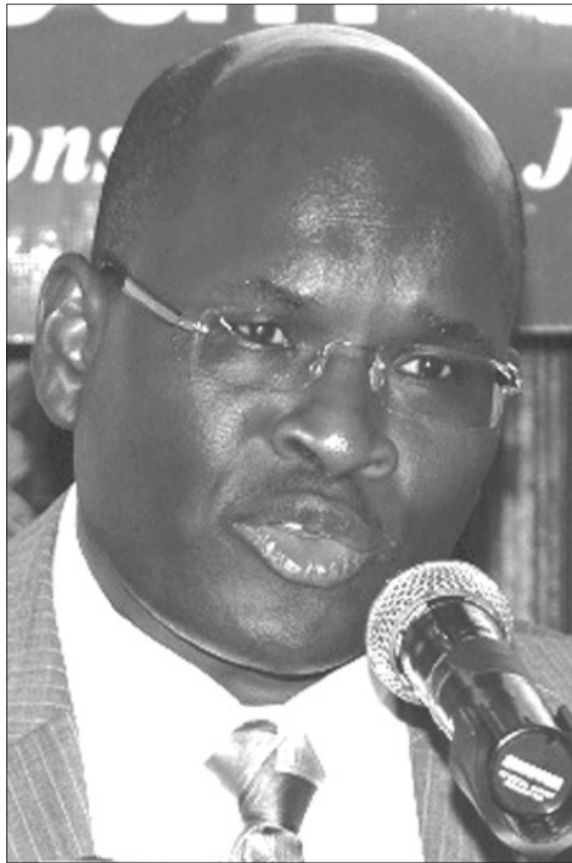
Speaking at Murang'a Teachers Training College during the Murang'a South district education day, the PS said ultimate goal is to ensure that education offered prepares learners for the competitive job market.

He also cited lack of managerial skills in public schools as a factor that was largely to blame for the poor results in national examinations.

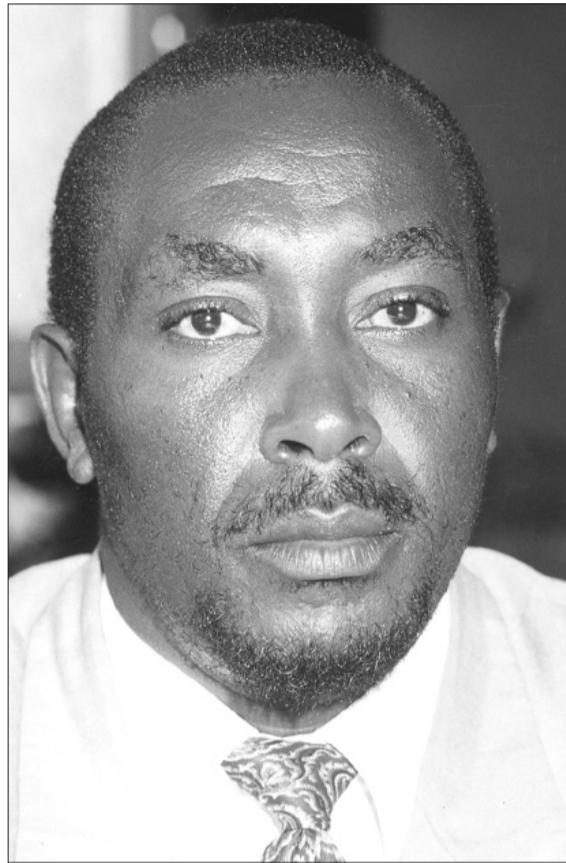
He said Public Primary schools had continued to perform poorly despite the billions of shillings pumped by the government to facilitate their operations.

Accompanied by Maragua MP Elias Mbau, PS said, the government in collaboration with universities offering management and leadership courses have organized short courses for head teachers.

"We have come up with plans to have school heads un-



Prof. Ole Kiyiapi: Education PS



Mr. Mbau: Maragua MP

dergo short courses on management and leadership as a strategy to improve results," said the PS.

Heads, he said, must be equipped with knowledge aimed at improving educational standards in their respective institutions.

He observed private schools continued to excel in performance despite spending little

funds as compared to public institutions where billions of shillings are pumped every year.

He said the country requires skilled professionals in all the sectors of the economy in order to attain vision 2030 and match the developed nations.

"Skilled human resource is paramount to speed up development in the country while

leaders must have the capacity to come out with workable policies," said Kiyiapi.

Maragua MP on his part called on the government to put the drought hit Makuyu division in the school feeding programme.

The region, he said was marked by declining enrolment during the dry spells and thus the need for intervention.

Japan funds school in Bungoma

By JOEL JUMA

JAPAN is set to finance the construction of modern facilities at a primary school in Bungoma County at a cost of Kshs70 million.

The school with a population of over 1,900 pupils, is congested and requires more classrooms and toilets for smooth learning.

Mupeli Primary School will get 36 new classrooms and toilets to accommodate the high number of pupils.

An assistant minister in the Office of the Prime Minister Alfred Khang'ati said the partnership with Japan seeks to improve education standards in slum schools in the county.

Khang'ati was speaking at Masinde Muliro Stadium during a meeting of Kenya Primary School Heads Association, Western branch.

The association's branch Chairman Josephat Otiende, Secretary David Ikunza and Western Provincial Director of Education (PDE) Kenneth Misoi also addressed the meeting.

The school's head-teacher Josephine Masinde said an administration block will be part of the project. She said tenders for the work are already out adding that the project is set to commence next month.

Khang'ati disclosed that three other primary schools in Kanduyi constituency will get Kshs45 million under the Slum Upgrading Programme.

He said Bukhamwele, Moi and Sio primary schools will each get Kshs15 million to put up more classrooms and toilets.

Khang'ati added that all schools in the district will be provided with computers starting from next month.

He said over 500 computers are at the port of Mombasa awaiting clearance.

The assistant minister said the donations seek to promote information technology in schools.

Ikunza and Otiende asked the Government to employ more teachers to reduce workload on the current personnel.

They explained that the current shortage in the province stands at 15,000 teachers.

Misoi called for prudent financial management of devolved funds in schools. He said the Ministry of Education will not allow heads to misuse public funds at the expense of quality education.

Misoi said parents should supervise their schools to ensure books and other learning materials are purchased after their schools get funds from the Government.

Free primary education praised

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE government has continued to invest in the education sector in order to get qualified manpower that can run the affairs of the country effectively.

An education official in Bungoma South District, Mr. Elijah Owiti, who is in charge of the administration of both primary and secondary schools in the area, made the remarks recently at St. Martin's Mwibale secondary school during the institution's Annual General Meeting (AGM) where he was the chief guest.

Mr. Owiti challenged parents to take advantage of the Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Secondary Education (FSE) and send all their children to school.

He said that the government started FPE and FSE in order to ensure that the young generation is compliant with the contents of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and vision 2030 which are key to global economic social and political prosperity.

The education officer disclosed that St. Martin's Mwibale secondary school in East Bukusu location is one of the beneficiaries of ICT project in Kanduyi constituency. This project is under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) factored into the previous budget, 2010/2011 financial year by finance minister.

Mr. Owiti said that in every constituency five schools were identified to benefit from the programme add-

ing that each beneficiary will receive Kshs. 900,000 before June this year to buy computers.

He named the other beneficiaries of the ICT project in Kanduyi constituency as: St. Mary's Kibabii Boys in Kibabii location, Namachanja High School in Township location, St. Peter's Musikoma Secondary school in Musikoma location and Misanga Secondary school in Bukembe location.

The education officer disclosed that money to buy computers had come at the time when 106 teachers from 53 schools, both primary and secondary had been trained on computer courtesy of Kanduyi Constituency Development Funds (CDF).

Mr. Owiti noted with pride that most beneficiaries of the ICT project

including St. Martin's Mwibale had already constructed computer laboratories and have power connections.

He cautioned men who marry or impregnate school girls saying it is criminal offence to cause a girl to drop out of school.

The school Principal Mrs. Emily Muhonja challenged parents to ensure that children who do not qualify for university entry are enrolled in middle level colleges and youth polytechnics to acquire technical skills.

During the meeting Mr. Paul Mukhongo was re-elected Parents Teachers Association (PTA) chair.

The parents unanimously resolved to construct two more classrooms as their PTA project in order to cope with the increasing number of students.

Give bursary to day school students — Keya

By JOEL JUMA

Assistant Minister Manyala Keya wants the government to scrap a policy that bars day school students from accessing bursary funds.

Keya called on Education Minister Sam Ongeri to review the policy for the sake of needy students in day schools.

"I have allocated Kshs9 million as bursary to needy students with majority of them being in day schools," he

noted.

Keya was speaking at Ikonyero Secondary School where he issued a Kshs3 million Constituency Development Fund cheque for the construction of a tuition block.

Elsewhere, Kenya Secondary Schools Head Teachers Association Western branch executive committee member Ezekia Akang'o accused MPs of delaying to release bursary funds.

Akang'o said many students had finished the First Term with fee ar-

rears because constituency bursary committees had not processed their applications. He claimed students in Kakamega County owe schools more than Kshs100 million in school fees arrears.

Keya said Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should advertise all teaching vacancies to avoid secret employment. He said it is unfair for TSC to recruit teachers through schools board of governors, without publishing institutions where vacancies exist.

He said advertising vacancies will give qualified teachers a chance to compete equally for the positions.

Kenya Union of Post Primary Education of Teachers national chairman Akello Misori and Kenya National Union of Teachers Western Provincial Council secretary John Wesonga claimed TSC was hiring teachers secretly.

The two claimed TSC had started hiring teachers without advertising the positions.

Kalonzo, bishop vouch for judiciary

By KAVYU-KURA

VICE President Kalonzo Musyoka and Mwingi clergyman Bishop Robert Mutemi have urged Kenyans to have faith in the country's judicial system.

The two spoke against the background of a spirited push by the government to have the International Criminal Court (ICC) cases against six suspects of post-election violence deferred arguing that a reformed judiciary had the capacity to handle the cases as well as many others involving the post election violence.

They spoke even as the suspects, popularly known as Ocampo six who included Deputy prime minister Uhuru Kenyatta, head of the civil service Francis Muthaura, former ministers Henry Kosgey and William Ruto, the former police commissioner and the current postmaster general Hussein Ali were headed to the Hague with their first date with ICC.

Kalonzo said it was time Kenyans trusted the magnanimity of the new constitution that would empower the country's institutions like the judiciary and the police to deliver impartial justice to all and sundry.

He urged Kenyans to have faith in the judiciary and the police force, saying they are able to adequately prosecute and hear the post election violence cases

Bishop Mutemi, of the Global Vision Church (GVC) International, said Kenyans should show respect to the country's professionals working in the judiciary and allow them to try the post election violence suspects instead of consigning to the Hague.

The Cleric said that by allowing the post elections suspects to be tried in the Hague, Kenya was ceding its independence as "the country cannot claim to be independent while its judiciary cannot be entrusted with fairly trying the Ocampo six."

Kalonzo who recently ended President Mwai Kibaki's shuttle diplomacy errand to seek international support for the deferral of the Ocampo six cases was speaking recently during a harambee for Mutithi Secondary school in Mwea West of Kirinyaga

County while Bishop Mutemi spoke to the Media in his (Kalonzo's) home backyard of Mwingi town.

"There is no need of relying on foreigners to come and do investigations for us. We have competent Kenyans who can do it," Kalonzo insisted.

On the widely debated shuttle diplomacy, Kalonzo assured that he was not representing the rights of the Ocampo Six only but the rights all Kenyans. He said justice for all Kenyans was paramount, noting that it was time for peace, national healing and reconciliation among Kenyans.

Mr. Musyoka said the new constitution will ensure all areas are developed equally.

The Vice President assured that after the 2012 general election there will be complete separation of power of Kenya's institutions. He called on Kenyans to coexist with one another in order to development in the coun-

try.

He said justice for all Kenyans was paramount, noting it was now time for peace, national healing and reconciliation. The clergyman said Kenyans could not afford to be spectators in issues and events that affect their countrymen and must take country and be at the top of things in resolving such issues.

He said he was optimistic that the ongoing judicial reforms would weed the institution of corrupt element and put in place a credible and competent outfit that would not only try the Ocampo six but many other people suspected to have taken part in the post election violence.

"We are not saying the Ocampo six are innocent neither are we against their being tried in the Hague but we want the due legal process in Kenya to be given a chance instead on mortgaging the country to external forces

as if we cannot handle our issues internally," said the Bishop.

He added that Kenyans cannot afford to be spectators in the crucial matter of dealing with the post election violence which is directly affecting fellow Kenyans. He said that Kenyans must be allowed control of the matter and set up a credible justice system in line with the new constitution.

Bishop Mutemi said that the ongoing judicial reforms would ensure the bad eggs and the corrupt in the judiciary are weeded out and the honest professional left or put in place to run a credible system that commands the respect of Kenyans.;

The clergy said thus: "Let Kenya and Kenyans be allowed to seep clean their house without having to turn to outsiders. If the country finds it impossible to make things move, then it will at its own volition will seek external help," said the Church leader.



Kalonzo speaks to businessman Cosmas Mutati Nzoka during a recent a harambee for the Mwingi St. Josephs Seminary where he equally called for the support of the quest for the deferral of the ICC cases Kitui South MP Isaac Muoki looks on.

Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Pan Paper society faces collapse

By JOEL JUMA

A COOPERATIVE society in Bungoma County is on the verge of collapse due to failure by cash-strapped Webuye Pan Paper Mills to remit over Kshs130 million from members.

The mill has not remitted any money to Webuye Pan Paper Mills Savings and Credit Cooperative Society since it went under, and even after its revival.

Receiver managers are yet to consider reducing the amount after taking over the firm.

The society is currently being faced with backlog of loan applications from members.

Western Provincial Cooperative Officer Nathan Mukhweso said his ministry has asked local MPs to ensure the society gets part of the money the government has set aside to restore the mill.

The Government had promised to inject over Kshs500 million to fast-track the revival of the paper mill.

The mill stopped processing paper soon after it was reopened by President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga during the referendum campaigns.

Speaking during a leaders meeting at a Kakamega hotel, Mukhweso also disclosed that over 40 societies have been formed in the matatu industry in Western.

He assured that the societies would be managed professionally and cautioned drivers and conductors against violating rules.

"Managers of cooperative societies will now be required to employ the drivers and conductors," said Mukhweso.

He explained that passenger service vehicles would also have their own insurance firms.

"Matatus will have their insurances the same way societies have the Cooperative Insurance," he noted.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers Western Provincial Council Secretary John Wesonga said MPs should mobilise resources to enable farmers purchase shares in sugar companies when privatised.

Wesonga regretted that MPs are not taking any step to mobilise funds yet the process of privatising Nzoia Sugar Company was underway. Mukhweso said the cooperative sector will purchase of shares at the factory.

Coast salt factories closed down

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE country could face a severe shortage of salt following the closure of three main salt processing plants in Magarini District last month.

The factories were closed for failing to meet required working conditions. Kensalt Ltd, Krystaline Salt Marereni and Kurawa Salt Industries were closed in a major crackdown on manufacturers who flout labour laws.

A team of inspectors from the Ministry of Public Health led by Malindi and Magarini District Occupational and Health Officer, Mr. Samuel Mwasambu, visited the area to ascertain whether the firms had complied with a two-week ultimatum issued by the minister directing them to fulfill all labour requirements.

The move followed a visit by

Minister for Labour, Mr. John Munyes, to the firms at Gongoni and Marereni on February 28. The minister discovered that majority of the firms did not observe human rights and labour laws.

The team was barred by watchmen from accessing Krystaline Salt Firm in Gongoni and proceeded to other industries following a bitter exchange with the management.

Mr. Mwasambu who spoke in Malindi said the closed firms did not have staff toilets as recommended by the minister. The workers relieved themselves in nearby thickets.

"They did not have safe drinking water for salt harvesters, the workers did not have proper protective gear like gumboots, overall or sun goggles," said the officer.

"The companies did not have shelter for workers, no safety and health committees or safety poli-

cies," said Mr. Mwasambu.

Only Malindi Salt and Kemu Salt had complied with the directives, said the officer. Tana Salt Ltd was warned that it will be closed unless it fulfills all the conditions.

Gongoni and Marereni areas in Magarini district are the chief salt producers in the country. The factories rake in more than Kshs.10 billion in revenue annually.

Some of the salt is exported to Middle East and African countries.

Mr. Mwasambu said no lorry is allowed to ferry salt out of the factories until the "prohibition notice stopping all activities" or closure order is lifted in writing after they comply with all conditions.

"All the 718 staff of the closed firms must earn full salaries and allowances during the entire period of the closure according to the Occupational, Safety and Health Act Section 118," he said.

The officer warned that if the firms defy the closure order, they would be charged in court and may pay a Kshs.1 million fine.

Councillors Emmanuel Kapombe (Gongoni), Albert Kiraga (Fundisa), Stanly Kenga (Marereni) and Joseph Gunga (Nominated) hailed the move, saying the staff had been oppressed for a long time.

"Workers have been exposed to dehumanizing conditions and oppressed by the salt firms for much too long. It's time drastic legal action was taken," said Councillor Kenga.

Area MP, who is also the Fisheries minister, Mr. Amason Kingi, supported the action. "It's encouraging that a Government department is acting. This is the time of effective governance. Impunity has no place in Kenya today. I call upon other departments to equally do their job"

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

Only the people can stop these politicians

THE post-election violence (PEV) that rocked this country after the bungled Presidential election results is still fresh in the minds of Kenyans almost four years after the formation of the government of national unity. And with the next general elections only a few months away, Kenyans are becoming even more worried of their safety.

The heightened political temperature over the ICC prosecutions and the Kibaki succession is not helping matters either. More effort therefore needs to be put towards reducing the rising tension. Peacemaking efforts by the Partnership for Peace Project in Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western provinces, with the support of the European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, is a good example. We believe there are many more such efforts elsewhere within the republic of Kenya by other groups. In our view, such efforts need to be concerted for greater impact.

We share the view of Ambassador Ochieng' Adalla, the executive director of the Africa Peace Forum, that Members of Parliament were still involving themselves in hate speeches yet the memory of the PEV was still fresh in the minds of Kenyans.

Ambassador Ochieng' Adalla rightly reminds us that the PEV didn't happen because of ignorance but as a result of political hatred and historical injustices.

He therefore suggests that reconciliation and healing process is necessary to avoid a repeat of the 2007/8 violence. We hasten to add that there is need to address long term issues which caused the violence; that people should not lose sight of the situation out there but be on the lookout; parties involved in peace keeping were to compliment and not compete one another; that parties involved should keep reminding others that peace is vital and that it takes a long process and patience to be achieved and that Kenyans must bear full responsibility of what happened before they proceed on with preaching peace.

We say so because peace will not be achieved and sustained if we continue with business as usual. The people must also play their part in the search and maintenance of peace because when war comes they bear its heaviest brunt. That is the reason why only the poor, or the so-called Internally Displaced Persons are ones still languishing in makeshift camps and abject poverty.



COMMENTARY

KNHRC: Participate in implementation of new law

KENYANS have been challenged to be vigilant and to actively participate in the implementation of the constitution, instead of leaving the process to the politicians.

Speaking during a conference convened by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights Commission (KNCHR), Commissioner Mr. Lawrence Mute and other human rights officials also urged Kenyans to familiarise themselves with all the 18 chapters and 264 articles of the Constitution.

"I am calling upon Kenyans not to sit back and watch assuming that things will be done transparently now that they have passed and promulgated the Constitution. I am challenging everybody who took part in the creation of the Constitution to ensure that no one goes against its requirements," said Commissioner Lawrence Mute.

Mr. Mute emphasised participation of the people, particularly in appointment of people to hold key public offices.

The Commissioners said that Chapter Four, which contains the Bill of Rights, is a must read for every citizen.

Commissioner Tom Kagwe said equality does not only mean equal treatment of genders but also includes many things such as opportunities in the entitlement to all documents of registration or identification, whether by birth or

registration, for dual citizenship.

He said the Kenya National Human Rights and Equality Commission's (KNHREC) provided for in Article 59 main role is to promote respect for human rights which includes principles that underpin enjoyment of those rights such as equality and human dignity.

He challenged the disabled persons who have been given positions in the new constitution not to shy away from seeking political offices since disability is not inability.

The conference was convened to present a report on the historical August 2010 referendum. The report indicated that over 60 per cent of eligible Kenyans voted in the referendum.

On implementation, the Commissioners said although there is still a long way to go, the process was so far on the right track.

"The referendum was not just another electoral process. It helped realise a new constitutional dispensation in which everyone finds freedom of expression and protection. The progress since its promulgation is so far, so good," Commissioner Kagwe said.

The Commissioners said although the run-up to the refer-

endum was full of frustrations like the ever shifting political interests of parties of the Coalition Government, they never lost hope.

The other challenge, they said, was dealing with emerging ethnic and political interested groups among mainstream and evangelical Christian organisations.

Besides promoting civic education through community-based human rights networks, KHRC was at one point forced to become a mediator within CoE's Reference Group to which it belonged.

Ms Mumbi Ngugi of FIDA-Kenya decried widespread discrimination along ethnic lines particularly in distribution of employment opportunities. She said this trend had dragged the country backwards in terms of development.

Ms Ngugi called for the application of affirmative action in health facilities with some hospitals being reserved for women. This, she said, did not amount to discrimination since women health needs require more specialised attention.

Ms Barbara Cohen, who talked from international perspective, said most organisations in Kenya shy away from offenses to do with sexuality.

She added that Human Rights and Gender Equality Organization had been proposed to merge and form one commission that caters for gender issues, the disabled and children.



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Enhancing governance for all

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Consultant accused of delaying project

By KAVYU-KURA

THE Mwingi Central District Development Committee (DDC) has criticized a consulting firm over delays in jumpstarting the Kshs4.1 billion phase II of the Kiambere-Mwingi Water supply project.

The committee under the chairmanship of DC Peter Kinuthia expressed concern that the construction of the Italian government-funded pipeline project that was to take off last January had been delayed as the consultant is yet to remit his report.

"It is surprising that Tanathi Water Services Board has been held back from implementing the project on time because the consultant has failed to deliver the report on time," fumed the DC.

Kinuthia led the DDC in demanding that Tanathi Water Services Board takes up the case and pressurizes the consultant to deliver the report immediately.

The DC said Mwingi town had been plagued by serious water shortages due to regular breakages along the Kiambere-Mwingi water supply project noting that the problem would only be solved if the aged pipeline was rehabilitated.

Kinuthia told the DDC meeting that due to the current drought, a serious water scarcity had affected most parts of Mwingi Central but the government had allocated Kshs1 million for water tankering especially to institutions such as schools to prevent closures.

He added that due to the current



The Mwingi Central DC Peter Kinuthia as he chaired the DDC meeting on Wednesday. Next to him is the District development officer Winfred Kirimi who is the DDC's secretary. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

famine in the district, 65,000 people in a population of 103,000 were currently receiving food rations from government.

The DC lamented that the prevailing situation painted a gloomy picture as the district's population has to rely on relief food until February

next year when a good harvest is expected after the October-December short rains.

He called on the department of livestock development and marketing to encourage cattle keepers to avoid losses by selling off their livestock before they are weakened by

the drought.

The district agricultural officer Haroun Goro noted that since dependence on rain fed agriculture had led to frequent crop failure, there was need to change tact and embrace water harvesting technologies for small scale irrigation.

Plans underway to improve ferry services

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

TWO new ferries are set to be bought to serve Malindi and the South Coast in the current financial year.

The Kenya Ferry Services (KFS) is also addressing jetty and ramp maintenance, as well as safety equipment.

The new drive to improve the ferry services at both Likoni and Mtongwe are aimed at achieving the strategic objective of managing commercially viable operations that are safe and reliable.

KFS is one of the 11 state corporations and semi-autonomous Government agencies under the Ministry of Transport. KFS provides free ferry services to pedestrian across the Likoni and Mtongwe Channels on the Indian Ocean.

It remains an important agency for

providing the only link between the main land and the island of Mombasa.

The agency came into being in November 1989 after the Government took over the operations of ferry services from the former operators, the Kenya Bus Services Ltd.

The Government then mandated the Kenya Ports Authority to run the services on its behalf.

In 1998, however, the Government through the Sessional Paper No. 3 formalised the ownership of the company by transforming the contribution of both the Government and Kenya Ports Authority into equity.

Eighty per cent of the company is today owned by the Government and 20 per cent by the Kenya Ports Authority.

Currently, the company's main activity is the provision of a ferry link to both pedestrians and vehicle traf-

fic. Pedestrians constitute about 70 per cent of the total business volume whereas vehicles count for 30 per cent. Vehicles pay a government approved toll charges, while pedestrians cross free of charge.

Surveys conducted in May and August last year revealed that there were 170,000 and 220,000 pedestrians respectively using the ferry daily. Vehicles crossing per day were 3,800 in May, 5,500 in August and 7,400 in December last year.

This continuing increase in the crossings is attributed to more public confidence in the safety of the services, tourism, residential housing within the Likoni area, among other factors.

Previous problems dodging the Kenya Ferry Services included dilapidated and old ferries which were more than twenty years old. The ferry sizes were also small, sixty metres for Liko-

ni and 45 metres for Mtongwe. This problem funds during the 2003/2004 financial year. Procurement tenders both local and international were advertised for the construction of two ferries.

With the commissioning of the two new ferries and the refurbishment of MVs Kilindini, Harambee and Nyayo, the KFS managing director, Mr. Musa Hassan Musa is confident that the corporation will surmount its current challenges and deliver better services.

The current on-going projects aimed at achieving better services and increasing revenue base include the purchase of new engines, operating four ferries every 10 minutes, improving and expanding the dry-dock repair and maintenance yards.

Streamlining the maintenance programme is being given top priority and sometimes continues late into the night, Mr. Musa says. Ferries should be dry-docked every two and half years but in the past they remained without dry-docking for upto eight years.

In its expansion programme, KFS is planning to purchase two more ferries during the 2011/2012 financial year for coastal operations to Malindi and the South Coast.

Jetty and ramp maintenance as well as safety equipments are also being given priority. The new drive and momentum to improve the Ferry Services at both Likoni and Mtongwe are aimed at achieving the strategic objective of managing a commercially viable ferry services that are safe and reliable.



Pedestrians and motorists on one of the ferries at Likoni. Photo/File

Citizens input on EAC crucial - says official

By KAVYU-KURA

THE input of the residents of the five East African Community (EAC) member states is invaluable in formulating policies that would ensure smooth implementation of the federation.

Speaking in Mwingi recently, Ministry of East African Community Director of Social Affairs Agnes Sila said the EAC secretariat is keen at developing policies that are beneficial to people of all member countries thus the need for their participation.

She said her ministry would hold sensitization workshops in all the 47 counties in the country to get the peoples' views.

Addressing one such workshop at the Mwingi County Council hall, Ms Sila said in the first phase of the sensitization workshops, 24 counties would be covered in 100 days while the rest would be visited later.

She said that workshops would also enable the people of Kenya to understand what the EAC entails and the available opportunities.

The Mwingi Central District Commissioner Peter Kinuthia pointed out that the success of EAC would not only be beneficial to the ordinary citizen but the local businessmen who had the freedom to cross borders and do business in all the five member countries.

"The local traders stand to benefit the most because they have the opportunity to freely cross borders and trade in Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania



The Director of Social Services in the Ministry of the East African Community Agnes Sila addresses participants at the Sensitization workshop at the Mwingi county hall. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

and other countries and bring back the money to develop our area," said Kinuthia.

The DC added that the larger Mwingi region that covers six districts would also be crucial to the economic advancement of the East African Community as it was endowed with

vast deposits of unexploited minerals like coal, iron ore and limestone among many others.

He said if well harnessed, the mineral rich Mwingi would not only boost the economic welfare of the locals but the entire EAC region thus the need for the locals to embrace the EAC fed-

eration.

Kinuthia called on the participants at the workshop, who included the region's District Commissioners, civic leaders, chiefs and religious and community leaders to inform people under their jurisdictions about the importance of the EAC.

Group alleges misuse of devolved funds

By BEKANDO TONDO

AN audit report by National Taxpayers Association revealed that Malindi, Lamu East and Lamu West constituencies could not account for over Kshs 56.2 Million allocated to them.

Mombasa Municipal Council was also found to have squandered a substantive amount of its Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) allocation as

most projects alleged to have received funding were non-existent.

Residents of Lamu West, concurred with the NTA audit report on the alleged misuse of the CDF monies.

Led by Mwangi Njoroge from Mpeketoni, the residents claimed that the CDF committee had refused to include community in the process to identification of community projects.

Mr. Njoroge further claimed some of the CDF allocations were skewed in favour of areas where the Area MP Fahim Twaha is believed enjoy massive support.

In Malindi Constituency, the residents demanded that the area MP Mr Gideon Mungaro account for the lost money.

Mr. Rashid Salim said that it was unacceptable for the constituency to

lose such amounts of money in dubious circumstances when critical areas were crying for attention.

Mr. Mzungu Ngoma, a director with the Institute for Participatory Development said lack of transparency in the funding and implementation of community projects was to be blame for the gross misuse of the taxpayers' funds.

Mr. Ngoma whose organization operates in Malindi and Magarini constituencies noted that there was little involvement of the community in the selection and implementation of the projects.

According to the audit report, Malindi constituency had received Kshs81.3 million during the last financial year but was unable to account for Kshs28.4 million.

Lamu West received Kshs 35 million but could not account for Kshs12.4 million or explain how that money was exactly used for.

Lamu East constituency development committee was unable to account for Kshs 15.4 million out of the Kshs41.9 million allocation.

At the Mombasa Municipal Council, the deputy mayor Mr. John Mcharo said that the funds in question had been sparsely spread out to various development projects in the area and thus the impact was negligible.

He says the situation had been compounded by the fact that over 90 percent of LATF allocation went into clearing debts leaving the council with very little to oversee implementation of projects.

LATF abused in Western — report

By JOEL JUMA

CORRUPTION and misuse of Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) has remained rampant in councils in Western Province.

A recent report compiled by an organisation dealing with devolved funds cited widespread misuse of LATF by local authorities in the region. Busia Municipal Council for example is accused of failing to account for over Kshs1.2 million it received in 2006/2007 financial year.

The council received over Kshs17 million during financial year, out of which 6 per cent went missing. The report by the National taxpayers association (NTA) indicates that ghost projects accounted for Kshs1.2 million.

NTA Western Regional Coordinator Belinda Nekesa notes that residents were worried that their taxes are not being used effectively, as some projects have stalled.

Nekesa explained that auditing of the LATF funds has now shifted from Busia to local authorities in Bungoma, Kakamega and Vihiga Counties due to public outcry.

He cited a case where a school in Busia town was allocated Kshs600,000 for construction of classrooms but only received Kshs200,000.

Nekesa said chief officers in local authorities and contractors are colluding to embezzle devolved funds.

"We have cases where councillors demand kick backs before they allow certain contractors to take up jobs in their wards. This has given room to corruption and shoddy work," he added. Kenya Local Government Workers Union (KLGWU) also acknowledged that corruption is rife in local authorities.

The union's Western Regional Secretary Juvenus Orai said tendering procedures are not being followed during hiring and purchasing of goods and services.

"Councillors and chief officers have formed companies which they are using to fleece local authorities millions of shillings," said Orai.

Orai claimed councillors are now acting as directors of construction companies where they allocate funds for rehabilitation of roads in their wards. Orai further accused civic leaders of making unnecessary trips.

He said councillors are only allowed to make one trip in a period of five years but many are making it an annual affair.

Orai made the remarks as it emerged that Kakamega Mayor Vincent Anjeche was in the United Kingdom pursuing his personal matters, allegedly funded by the council.

Other councillors at the council are in Uganda for a one-week trip in the company of the Town Clerk R. Mukabwe. The trip by the councillors comes barely a week after the Government released LATF money to the local authorities countrywide.

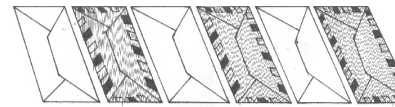
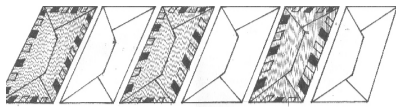
The Union Secretary explained that lack of financial management skills is also contributing to numerous cases of salary arrears at councils.

He noted that Webuye Municipal Council has not paid salary arrears amounting to millions of shillings.

"Workers at Webuye Municipal Council have gone without salaries for the last seven months," said Orai. He regretted that the welfare of workers has not been addressed even with the release of the funds.



Mombasa Municipal Council: Council was also found to have squandered a substantive amount of its Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) allocation.



Food shortage amid plenty a national shame

THE food crisis is here with us again. It has been ignored and brushed aside.

The rich and powerful are well fed, no food crisis, no shortage.

To the poor whose ability to afford food is no better now than in 1963, the hunger continues.

Hunger is linked to many contributing factors such as natural disaster, discrimination, war and poor infrastructure.

So why, regardless of the situation, is high-tech agriculture always assumed to be the only solution? This premise is put forward and supported by those who would benefit financially if their 'solutions' were implemented.

Corporations peddle their high technology genetically engineered seed and chemical packages, always with the "promise" of feeding the world.

Politicians and philanthropists, who may mean well, jump on the high technology bandwagon. Could the promise of financial support or investment return their apparent compassion?

Food shortages are seldom about a lack of food. There is plenty of food in Kenya and the shortages occur because of the inability to get food where it is needed and the inability to afford it.

These two problems are principally merely lack of justice. There are also ethnic considerations. A higher value should be placed on people than on corporate profit at the forefront, not an afterthought.

While many Kenyans go hungry, thousands of kilos of grain rot in storage. Unable to afford the grain, the hungry depend on the State to distribute food. Apparently that's not going so well.

Not everyone living in this country goes hungry. Those with money eat. Not everyone in a rich country is well fed. Those without money go hungry. For instance, the US is said to have the safest and most abundant food supply in the world, yet even there, surrounded by an over abundance of food, there are many hungry people and the number is growing.

Women, not Government, feed most of the population, and the greatest portion of the world's diet still relies on crops and farming systems developed and cultivated by the indigenous for centuries.

Fair methods of land distribution must be considered. A fair and just food system depends on smallholder farmers having access to land. The cause of hunger is not a lack of technology, rather it results when people are not allowed to participate in a food system of their choosing.

Okwaro Oscar, Funyula.

IDPs crisis calls for innovative solutions

THERE are many ways of solving problems afflicting displaced families.

When the subject is mentioned, what comes to mind is giving the displaced people money provided they sign away their IDP status.

Of course, that should be arrived at after dividing the available money for resettlement with the number of IDPs.

This business of looking for willing sellers of land is not credible because it allows some officials to arrange for kickbacks from the sellers.

Additionally, most of the land on offer is hardly productive. And, who said all IDPs were farmers?

Secondly, the state can settle IDPs in ADC farms to work in the style of Israel's Kibbutz farms where each IDP has a share and gets a salary every month. That's how Israel has become a net food and fruit exporter.

That aside, the country must start consolidating land and moving people to well planned settlements (or modern villages) so that professional farmers can do mechanised high net worth farming, employ people in a formal manner and provide schools, infrastructure, electricity, water, sewer lines and security.

While still on farming, let the Government explore ways of using irrigated commercial farming in low-density areas like Eastern, Coast and North Eastern provinces. The soils here are still virgin.

Those saying IDPs should



IDPs in one of the camps. Photo/File

return to their farms are cruel and unreasonable because some IDPs are traumatised they can hardly go back.

Also, those that were trading need money to go back to doing what they know best.

Kariuki Muiri, Karatina.

* * *

PICTURES and stories of IDPs being chased by some communities is a sad practice as witnessed in Kitale recently.

Why on earth would you deny a fellow Kenyan an opportunity to settle in your area? They are not grabbing any land but being resettled

on plots bought by the Government.

Locals should not abuse these victims whatsoever.

The Constitution guarantees everybody the right to settle anywhere in any part of the nation, hence nobody should try and create monopoly that certain people cannot settle in some parts of the country.

Such a claim in itself is hate speech and Mr. Mzalendo Kibunjia should act.

IDPs are not happy to be in that state and we should remember these people are not in camps by choice but by historical accident. Where is our spirit of nationalism?

Kenyans should be remind-

ed that tribalism nepotism and disintegration have never moved any society an inch in terms of development.

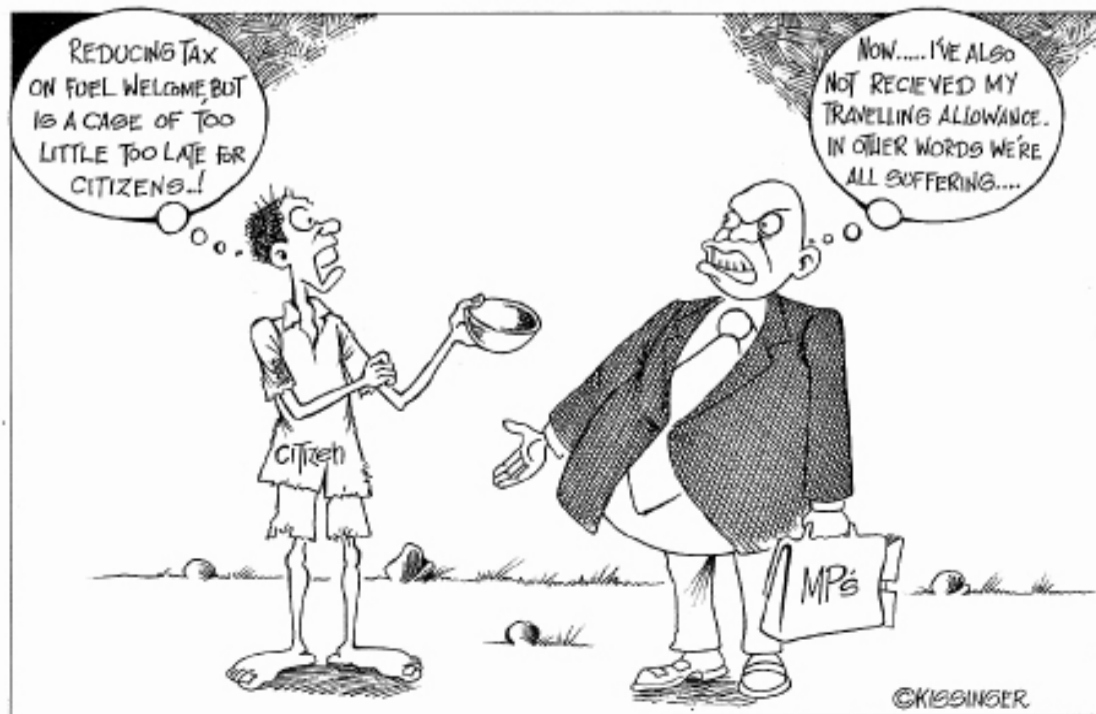
We should never be ready to be used once again by the selfish politicians to cause mayhem and harm fellow Kenyans.

We should be ready to embrace unity and love our fellow Kenyans no matter where they come from or the ideology they hold.

We should not be blinded by the politicians because today they differ but tomorrow they share the same platform.

It's only having diversity of people in the society that that we can achieve the much needed peace in our country. Let's have empathy to our brothers and sisters. We should think of the next generation and not the next General Election.

Owino Samwel, Kisumu.



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

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Yatta residents demand openness in use of funds

By KAVYU-KURA

RESIDENTS of Kenyatta area of Yatta District have resolved to keenly monitor use of devolved funds to check misuse.

The residents further resolved to closely monitor use of monies allocated to projects through Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) through community audit networks.

The resolutions were made during a one day civic education workshop on the role of community members in implementation of projects. It was organized by the Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRCE) and brought together community group leaders,

health workers, and youth leaders among others.

The resolution was catalyzed by concerns at the workshop that devolved funds in the area were not well utilized. Some speakers had pointed out that funds meant to directly benefit individual members of community like bursaries only benefited a select few.

A youth leader Stephen Masyula, said that transparency lacked in the use of CDF and LATF funds allocated to projects as the beneficiary community was neither appraised on how the money was utilized nor if the projects picked were based on the community's needs.

"The CDF and LATF money has been used in a numbers of

projects but these projects are neither selected by the community nor is the community appraised on how the funds are used. Managers of project have always kept community members in the dark," said the youth leader.

Timothy Kilungu claimed that education bursaries only went to children of people with political connections. He said although he was disabled without a reliable income his efforts to get bursary for his children have never been successful.

Forty-nine year-old Ruth Muen-do observed that due to the secrecy surrounding the way the CDF and LATF funds were used, it had been difficult for community members to prove misuse of funds although

a number of projects had stalled.

Partially blind Agnes Ndulu, 60, lamented that although a single parent, her attempts to secure bursary for her children had not yielded any fruits. She is now confronted with a huge fee balance of Sh60,000 for her daughter who recently cleared secondary school.

Ndulu claimed that although she had on several occasions presented her case to the area MP Charles Kilonzo, no assistance had come her way. She regrets that due to the huge fee balance her daughter is not able to obtain her certificates to apply for employment.

Addressing the gathering, a representative from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Amkeni Wakenya project that

funds the CHRCE civic education programme, Laban Cheruiyot, said residents had the right to demand accountability in the use of funds.

"The implementation of projects should not be secretive. All the information about the money allocated to projects must be given freely to the residents. Besides, it is the mandate of the community to nominate the managers of projects so that they can demand accountability from their appointees," said the UNDP official.

He encouraged residents to form "peoples projects monitoring committees" to seek the right information on the use of funds allocated to projects.

"These loose community project audit networks are free to query any dubious use of funds and ask the project management committees to fully account for all the money to the last penny as a way of ensuring transparency and accountability," he said.

Cheruiyot said close monitoring of the use of devolved funds by community members would discourage wayward individuals from misappropriating public funds.

Saying ensuring that funds were prudently used would improve the livelihoods for Kenyans, Cheruiyot said that his organization was keen on advocating for accountability.

The UNDP official said it was not only outrageous but unlawful to allocate bursaries to undeserving cases and leave out the truly needy.

"Government bursaries are meant for the neediest. The beneficiaries are supposed to be picked by decentralised committees at the locations and sub locations who know the most deserving cases," said Cheruiyot.

A civic educator from Kitui west, Julius Nyerere Musangi said in his home area many students had been educated to university level through the government bursaries and wondered why the same did not apply in Yatta constituency.

"CDF bursaries have supported the education of many children in other places. Why is it that this area is exceptional? As a community we must demand that our needy children are allocated bursaries," said Musangi.



Section of the residents who attended the Kenyatta workshop.

Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Bungoma residents agree on County location

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

BUNGOMA residents have unanimously agreed to build the County headquarters within the town centre.

A stakeholders' consultative meeting chaired by Bungoma South District Commissioner (DC) Mr. Wilfred Nyangwanga and attended by delegates from all the seven (7) districts which form the county unanimously endorsed the town as the most suitable location.

Two former Mt. Elgon Mps, Mr. Wilberforce Kisiero and Mr. John Serut said they

had no objection to Bungoma town which is in Bungoma south District being the county headquarters.

The duo however, quickly cautioned the Bukusu community which is predominant in the county against intimidating and victimizing the minority communities in the county.

Waving a copy of the new constitution Mr. Serut said, "This document which I refused to approve during the referendum is about numbers. I want to believe that our brothers and sisters will not use their numerical strength to victimize us."

Mr. Serut urged all the com-

munities in the county to be tolerant with one another adding that in democracies the majority have the way but minority have their say.

It is imperative to note that the Sabaot, Tachoni, Iteso and Batura are the minority communities in the populous Bungoma County.

During the stakeholders' consultative meeting, conspicuous absentees were all the current six [6] sitting Mps from the county.

Former Mps from the county who attended the meeting include:- Wilberforce Kisiero and John Serut – Mt. Elgon constit-

uency, Maurice Makhanu-Kanduyi constituency, Lawrence Sifuna – Bumula constituency, Joash Wamang'oli- Webuye constituency and John Munyasia – Sirisia constituency.

Mr. Sifuna concurred with Mr. Serut that tolerance should be the guiding principle for peaceful co-existence and rapid development in the county.

Mr. Makhanu enumerated infrastructural development that make Bungoma town to be the most suited place for the county headquarters.

The former legislator and provincial administrator said the town is easily accessible

through a railway line, airstrip and the great north road – A104, besides various other roads.

Other facilities which Mr. Makhanu said the town has and that are appropriate for the county headquarters include social amenities, financial institutions, power, water, offices and room for expansion.

The town is 95.4 square km with eight civic wards and a population of 137,647 people.

It is the only town in the entire county with ten banks, a high court and all government decentralized departments.

KSB rolls out major cane projects

By JOEL JUMA

KENYA Sugar Board (KSB) has rolled out a Kshs290 million programme to construct bridges and purchase tractors for cane farmers in Kakamega County.

The construction of bridges will cost Kshs140 million while the remaining Kshs150 million will go towards the purchase tractors and other farm machineries.

The bridges, once complete, are expected to reduce transportation costs from the farms to milling companies in West Kenya sugar belt.

KSB director Ewing Mwombe and West Kenya Out Growers Company general manager Hedwig Mandu said the move will reduce transport costs by about 30 per cent.

"We have allocated the funds for bridges to save farmers in far zones from incurring huge transport costs," said Mwombe.

The two explained that tenders for nine bridges will be given out by the end of this month.

The officials were speaking at Mujanja bridge in Malava constituency during a ground breaking ceremony.

Area DC Gideon Ombogi, KSB regional manager Laban Mulehi and KSB engineer Francis Inganga also addressed the function.

Areas earmarked to get bridges include Mkoko, Musungu, Mutsuma, Chemoroni, Silungai, Slesia, Kwaba and Luyeshe.

Mwombe said the board will



KSB has rolled out a programme to construct bridges and purchase tractors for cane farmers in Kakamega County.

be disbanded soon, as its term has expired, adding that farmers should be ready to elect new officials soon.

"I have performed as a director and I will be defending the seat when elections are called," added Mwombe.

Leaders from Kakamega North District led by former Malava MP Nathan Anaswa said they will campaign for the re-election

of Mwombe.

They explained that the three year term Mwombe was in office, they benefited greatly compared to other periods.

The Minister for Agriculture Sally Kosgei is set to dissolve the board any time this month. The decision will be communicated to the farmers and players in the industry through the Kenya gazette.

Planning Minister Wycliffe

Oparanya and assistant minister Manyala Keya indicated that they are piling pressure on Kosgei not to extend the term of office for the KSB directors.

The two said KSB directors had failed the farmers and should not seek the extension of their term in the office. Cabinet Minister Soita Shitanda's allies are rooting for the re-election of Mwombe in West Kenya zone.

ALGAK women demand their rights

By TITUS MAERO

THE Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya (ALGAK) Western Branch Women Caucus has asked President Mwai Kibaki to uphold the rule of law by appointing women to key government positions.

Over 40 councillors led by the Chairperson Councillor Ann Kataka said the constitution is clear that no more than two thirds of the appointments shall comprise of the same gender as stipulated in the legal document.

Kataka said as women leaders they need recognition as spelt out in the new constitution noting that apart from seeking recognition in employment circles, they would vie for electoral positions on equal footing with their men counterparts.

Speaking to reporters at the Kakamega Municipal Council main Chamber after a closed door meeting, Kataka said that as civic leaders they would push for women representation which has been neglected by previous regimes.

The civic leader pointed out that they had agreed to support women aspiring for the presidency, Senator, Governor, Parliamentary and Civic seats to enable them participate actively in the nation building.

Kataka observed that as a caucus they would sensitize women in the region on the need to register as voters and to embrace collective responsibility when it comes to gunning up for elective positions.

Special guests at the meeting were ALGAK Nyanza branch Secretary Councillor Carolyn Owen, Councillor Florence Matete of Homabay Municipal Council, who were hosted by councillor Bibiana Andabwa of the Kakamega Municipal Council.

State, Knut headed for showdown

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

A MAJOR showdown looms between the government and teachers if those hired as interns are not employed on a permanent basis. The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) is preparing its members for a major confrontation with the government if their fresh demands are not met.

The acting Secretary General David Okuto and the Acting national chairman Wilson Sosion, vowed to ensure that those employed as interns are absorbed into the service by the end of this year. They claimed that the procedure used to hire the interns was flawed but the union only accepted it as a temporary reprieve to address the biting shortage countrywide.

"But now that they have been incorporated into the system, we will fight to make sure that the government gives them their due reward," said Akuto.

They also took a swipe at the delay in concluding negotiations for housing, hardship and medical allowances.

"Corrupt officials in the government have been manipulating the negotiation process for their own selfish gains without putting the interest of teachers first," he said.

The two officials vowed to oppose the implementation of a new insurance policy, claiming that it was just a ploy to fleece them their hard earned money as they already contribute Kshs.92million monthly to NHIF, and were comfortable with the arrangement.

SHOMAP kitty boosted by government

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Government plans to commit a cool Kshs 515 million to jumpstart programmes aimed at creating employment and poverty reduction in 14 Districts by December this year.

The Ministry of Agriculture which is the main driver in the multimillion shilling programme will integrate horticultural farmers in value addition.

The projects include estab-

lishment of cottage industries to process produce before sale.

Under the Small Holder Horticultural Marketing Programme (SHOMAP), rural markets will be transformed into modern facilities with capacity to preserve produce and set up agro processing units.

Improvement of infrastructure, especially roads in areas that produce fruits and vegetables will be prioritized as inefficiency in marketing are addressed to reduce farmers expenses.

SHOMAP national project manager Peter Mbogo says Kshs5 million has already been used in the construction of modern markets in Bungoma, Imenti South, Ndaragua and Meru Central.

Another Kshs200 million has been earmarked for development of similar markets across 14 other Districts whose designs have been approved.

Mbogo said Kshs100 million will be used to improve roads across the programme zone in or-

der to ease the transportation of farmers produce to the upcoming markets.

Speaking at Kariene in Meru Central District where he commissioned the construction works of a Kshs37 million modern horticultural market recently, Mr. Mbugua said the government was committed to strengthening the domestic horticultural sector which he said contributed to over Kshs 74 billion to the national economy.

AP boss advises officers on new law

By BOB OMBATI

ADMINISTRATION Police (AP) Commandant, Kinuthia Mbugua has underscored the need for law enforcers in the country to familiarize themselves with the new constitution and pay particular attention to the bill of rights which has been enhanced to avoid violating the law.

The commandant who was on a familiarization tour of Kisii County said police officers were now under obligation to respect

and protect the rights of citizens as enshrined in the new constitution saying those who violate them will held accountable.

"You should obtain a copy of the new constitution and read to know your rights and those of the public. That is the only way you will avoid acting in contravention of the new law," said Kinuthia.

Kinuthia, who was accompanied by Eastern Nyanza Regional Commissioner, Lydia Muriuki, Kisii central District Commissioner Benjamin Njoroge, Marani DC,

Dennis Ogolla and senior police officers further urged the security agents to keep abreast with the changing technological advancements in order to conform to the highly anticipated reforms envisaged under the new constitutional dispensation. He challenged the officers to enroll in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) courses to help sharpen their skills to deal with emerging crime.

He at the same time warned the officers against engaging in corruption, stressing those found will

carry their crosses.

"You should justify your actions. If you do not, you will find yourself in trouble," said Kinuthia urging them to work professionally, maintain integrity and set good examples to the members of the public.

The commandant disclosed that the government had committed Kshs. 1billion to oversee the construction of new houses for all security agents in the country, adding that over 500 houses had been bought for officers in Nairobi.

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**HANNA
CARLSSON**



By **HANNAH
CLIFFORD**

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

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

Project holds first national policy dialogue

ON the 14th April, 2011, we held the first national policy dialogue conference at the PanAfric Hotel in Nairobi. The meeting sought to mobilize non-state actors to take up active roles in peace-building and mediation, as well as provide the government and other state institutions with better information and more accurate evaluation about sources of conflict, mounting tensions and danger of imminent violence. This was done with an aim to improve the framework for successful interventions by the state in short and long term prevention and management of conflicts.

Non-state actors in our partnership had the insight to identify negative ethnicity, land, and the lack of proper policies in the sugar and fishery industry causing missed employment opportunities for youth to be the

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**JANE
MURUTU**

core issues responsible for frequent outbreak of conflicts. Under this national platform, the participants shared knowledge on policies relevant to enhance peace while addressing gaps in peace building. National consensus on relevant action points in relation to policies requiring improvement was well articulated by one of our consultants. The process was useful in creating new contact points between state and non-state actors, and in creating renewed commitment towards pushing for peace reforms.

Although the forum was helpful, political actors as Member of Parliament were under-represented. Rather than this being a failure, it demonstrates the chal-

lenge of engaging these groups, and the need for a long term approach to engaging them.

Some of the recommendations from the conference included but not limited to:

- Building capacities of local non-state actors to engage in policy development/improvement;
- Catalyze similar forums in future;
- Pursue strategic interactions with political actors.

Before the national policy dialogue conference took place the project started with cross regional exchange visits. Fifteen network members from each province visit for seven days the reference point and some selected places with best practice experience in the respective two other provinces. First out was the Western network that visited Kuria and when this is being written the Nyanza network is visiting Kwana and Pokot Districts. The intention is to share

good conflict management methods and encourage all communities to positively compete in peace building. Their experiences will be posted on our interactive website on www.partnershipforpeace.eu but you will also find an article about the visit in Kuria in this issue.

Also in this issue you will find a summary of stages involved in developing a policy for improving the knowledge base of the CSOs as we put into action one of the stipulated recommendations above.

Finally, I wish to end using Robert Zoellick, World Bank President's words that, "If we are to break the cycles of violence and lessen the stresses that drive them, countries must develop more legitimate, accountable and capable national institutions that provide for citizen security, justice and jobs."

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

Western peace network visits Nyanza

ON Sunday 27th March a delegation of CSO representatives from the Western Province network arrived in Kuria to begin a week-long exchange visit.

The aim of the visit was to give the visiting CSOs an opportunity to learn from the local communities and groups on how they have successfully resolved conflicts and encourage all communities to positively compete in peace-building.

The first day of activities took place on Monday the 28th March. In the morning the delegation visited the Divisional Officer in Maberu Division, Kuria West. They were given an overview of the conflicts



By **HANNAH
CLIFFORD**

arising in the division and how the police have been attempting to tackle the situation. One of the problems, it was explained, was the proliferation of home-made guns, which had led to a number of deaths.

The delegation was then informed about the tradition of 'Iritongo' - the local community court for settling disputes. Members of the District Peace Committee (DPC) and local community leaders explained how one of processes, called 'Engoro' is used to cleanse perpetrators of their past crimes. During this process an anthill is dug and charms are placed inside, the perpetrator must pass through it 7 times while elders perform cleansing rituals. This is

done in front of the community so that they can partake in the healing process. The DPS also explained how they had encouraged people to voluntarily give up their guns, rather than relying on the use of force by the police. This is a system called 'Ekehore'. Present at the meeting was Waisilo Mahiri, the leader of peacebuilding efforts in the community. He gave an account of local traditional techniques which are being utilised to help the community overcome conflict. The delegates then headed towards Maberu Shopping Centre where they had an opportunity to meet People for Rural Change Trust officials who described their organisational background and current activities, which included: the establishment of traditional courts

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Leaders call for peaceful coexistence in Kenya

BY LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE European Union, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and local partners in Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western provinces have been undertaking a peace building and conflict mitigation programme since 2009. The overall intent has been to strengthen Non State Actors in community conflict mitigation and peace building.

The programme is in phases. During the initial phases a databank has been established on CSOs in each of the project regions, research details indicating conflict trends, capacity building support for CSOs, peacebuilding networks and a policy gap analysis by different regional working groups.

The current phase, which took off in February 2011 is policy directed. Provincial policy dialogue meetings have taken place in the target regions between CSOs stakeholders and state actors focusing on Negative Ethnicity, Land and unemployment (in terms of employment opportunities lost in the fishery industry and sugar industry) so far the discussions have generated suggestions and options for policies, legislation and administrative measure in reducing tension towards national cohesion.

It was in this regard that the national policy dialogue breakfast meeting was held in April 14, 2011, in Nairobi, to discuss outcomes of these previous meetings at a national level together with relevant institutions and stakeholders, to help identify the policy gaps and come up with possible recommendations of filling the gaps, and also come up with a way forward to make the project a success before its end which is just coming soon.

The meeting was flagged off by KAS-Kenya Deputy Resident representative, Mr. Gideon Ochanda who welcomed KAS country representative Ms. Anke Lerch to give a brief introduction of the project.

The chief guest, Ambassador Ochieng Adalla appreciated the good work being done by partnership for peace project and encouraged the organization to keep up the good work.



Ms. Anke Lerch (centre) during one of the functions. Photo/File

He felt for what has been going on in the country citing a case where some Members of Parliament were still involving themselves in hate speeches yet the memory of the PEV was still fresh in the minds of Kenyans

He also reminded the participants that the post election violence didn't happen because of ignorance but as a result of political hatred and historical injustices. He highlighted four issues which were forgotten incidences yet have very much affected Kenyans. They were:

- Democracy and political governance
- Economic governance and management
- Corporate governance and
- Social instability

He therefore suggested that reconciliation and healing process was necessary involving several sectors like the CSOs, political leaders among others

He forewarned Kenyans that PEV might repeat itself due to lack of political will to do the right thing and recommended that were

- There was need to address long term issues which caused violence
- People should not loose sight of the situation out there but be on the look out

● The parties involved in peace keeping were to compliment and not compete one another

● Parties involved should keep reminding others that peace is vital and it takes a long process and patience to be achieved

● Kenyans must bear full responsibility of what happened before they proceed on with preaching peace

Hon. Prof Margaret Kamar, who is also the M.P for Eldoret East, gave a brief speech before she left as she was rushing to another meeting. She thanked the the Partnership for Peace and KAS for the work they started in the violent prone areas and urged them to continue.

She volunteered to be consulted on issues of peace since she had a lot of experience in conflict resolution and have also been in several committees addressing conflict issues i.e. the conflict that arose between Kenya and Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania among others.

Hon. Kamar urged participants to use her as their ambassador in parliament who would speak on their behalf to MPs on peace

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Land identified as major cause of conflicts

BY AGGREY BUCHUNJU

LAND-ownership is one the major causes of conflicts in South Wanga Division, in Kakamaga County, a provincial administrator has claimed.

The South Wanga Division Officer, Mr. Stanley Langat, said land-related disputes account for over 80 per cent of cases arbitrated by the administration in the area.

"Over 80 per cent of disputes that we arbitrated in the last one year are land related pitting fathers and sons," the administrator said.

Mr. Langat who was speaking at Bukaya health centre during the Partnership for Peace Project evaluation meeting challenged old people in the area to allow their sons access land in order to minimize tension.

He claimed that most people aged over 70 years are yet to sub-divide and surrender their pieces of land to their sons because of self-interest or for fear that their sons may sell the land.

The provincial administrator observed that failure by the youth to engage in farming activities due to lack of land had rendered them not only idle but also easy preys for crooked politicians who use every trick in the book to stop their opponents from winning.

Mr. Langat also decried cattle rustling in the area saying the habit is another cause of conflicts in the area as people view their neighbours with suspicion. "Cattle rustling has also been a thorny issue in the four locations of this division, namely Musanda, Shikalame, Bukaya and Buchifi," the DO said.

He however, quickly pointed out that animal theft has reduced drastically in recent months following stringent measures being enforced in the area by the provincial administration, ministry of public health and non-state actors.

The administrator claimed that the menace was curbed after the provincial administration through village-elders who started to take stock of all cattle in the area. "All cattle are registered by the administration and if one wants to move his cow to the market for sale he must obtain a letter from the chief or assistant chief confirming that the cow is actually his," he said.

Mr. Langat disclosed that his office also deployed village elders to all slaughter houses in the area to record all animals in the abattoir and to ensure that slaughtering start after 8.00 am.

On sugarcane farming in the area, the administrator asked Mumias Sugar Company to allow farmers who want to grow the crop independently to do so.

This, the administrator observed will reduce friction between the sugar firm and farmers as the latter will be able to sell the crop to any factory that can offer better prices without coercion from Mumias Sugar Company. Lauding the work of the Partnership for the Peace Project in the area, the Divisional officer asked Kenyans to jealously guard peace saying that absence of peace in any region leads to underdevelopment.

Mr. Langat at the same time asked the Western Province partnership for peace project coordinator Mr. Chem Ngeyo who convened the meeting to extend the project to other regions arguing that the problems facing Kenyans differ from one region to another

The meeting was attended by provincial administrators, civic leaders, church leaders and civil society organizations) operating in the area.

Understanding stages of policy development

BY JANE MURUTU

POLICY can be considered as a "Statement of Intent" or a "Commitment". The term may apply to government, private sector organizations and groups, and individuals. Presidential executive orders, corporate privacy policies, and parliamentary rules of order are all examples of policy.

Policy differs from rules or law. While law can compel or prohibit behaviors for example a law requiring the payment of taxes on income, policy merely guides actions toward those that are most likely to achieve a desired outcome.

Stages of Policy paper includes but are

not limited to

● A policy briefing paper which happens at the initial debate

- Identifying issue of public interest
- Elaborate policy issues around it
- Picture policy options that can be taken to address the issue

- Do a policy gap analysis
- The policy Briefing paper presents a rationale for the policy at hand.

● A policy framework
- This covers the breadth, width and depth of this policy issue

- what is should cover, possible structure, possible arrangements of sections, possible institutional framework

- This is the skeleton policy

and

● A policy document that takes into account;
- Deliberate choices taken by government to address a particular issue

- Should articulate gaps, rationale and part of the framework

- Should bring conspicuously the institutional framework, objectives and policy options

- This is not complete without an implementation framework

All the above should precede the development of any legislation. Practically though this has not been followed keenly and we have had legislations without policies. In such a case a policy briefing paper not only follows the above format but also interrogates the already established legislation.



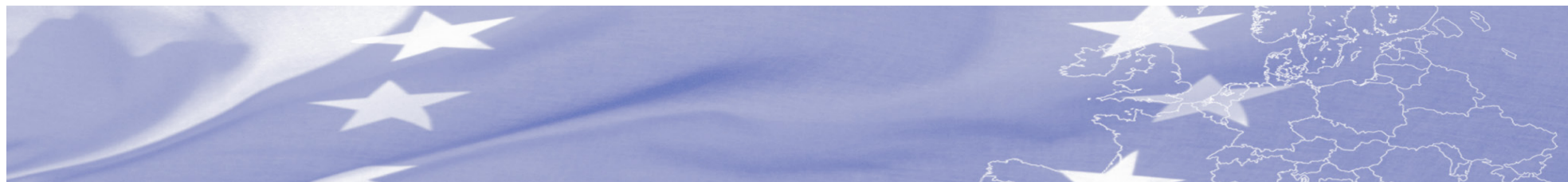
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Western peace network visits Nyanza

From Page 15

where domestic issues could be forwarded and shared before any disciplinary measures are taken. They also stressed need of winning the confidence of the Provincial Administration, community and judicial system in order to operate harmoniously.

On the morning of Tuesday 29th March the delegation made a courtesy call to the District Commissioner of Kuria West, accompanied by the DPC members. Also present were three other locals, Stephen Marwa – community informer - CIIR Magoya of Mwita Ward and Mzee Omondi. These three enabled the team sharpen their previous understanding of Iritongo: that it stressed the importance of diversification by different communities and was a general call for the youth to seek civic empowerment.

The delegation also had an opportunity to visit Ekivege shopping centre as well as Ekirege location headquarters where the area District Commissioner was scheduled to preside over a disarmament meeting. However, this was eventually cut short by heavy rains, though one fire arm was recovered in that day.

The following day, Wednesday 30th

March, the delegation travelled to the District headquarters of Kuria East, in Kengonga. Firstly they met with the Kuria East District Peace Committee members who introduced themselves and explained a little about the challenges facing the Committee. The delegation was then invited to meet with the District Commissioner for Kuria East. The District Commissioner gave the delegation members an account of the conflicts arising in Kuria East, which have been mostly between the Kuria and Maasai tribes, or between sub-clans of the Kuria tribe. Between the Kuria and Maasai, he explained, the conflicts have largely stemmed from incidents of cattle rustling and dispute over land grazing rights. Between the Kuria sub-clans the conflicts have been the result of cultural differences and feelings of superiority. The District Commissioner pointed out that the instigation of violence often comes from politicians mobilising youths, as a way of solidifying the politician's support-base. The Commissioner stated, however, that progress has been made; since December 2010 no lives have been lost and land disputes have been greatly reduced. This has been achieved through a variety of means:



Youths rioting during post-election violence in early 2008.

increased presence of ascaris in hotspot areas, peace caravans, youth programs of change, community forums encouraging people to surrender their weapons, and returning stolen cattle to

their owners. The District Commissioner then answered questions from the delegation members on the conflicts in

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Displaced Mt. Elgon families finally settled

By **AGRREY BUCHUNJU**

THE phase three re-settlement programme of Mt. Elgon families on Chebyuk settlement scheme is now complete, a provincial administrator has revealed.

Speaking to *The Link* in his office recently, the regional commissioner, upper Western Region Mr. Rashid Mohammad said allocation of the 4,330 acre farm has been done. Mr. Mohammad says that the farm was allocated to 1,732 beneficiaries with each beneficiary getting two and a half acres of land. He, however, quickly points out that there are 341 families that missed out on the allocation because the farm could not accommodate more families.

The provincial administrator discloses that the remaining 341 families will soon be bought land by the government in Trans-Nzoia District.

"The government is fully committed to ensuring that all families that were displaced during the infamous activities of the now disbanded Sabaot Land Defence Force (SLDF) are re-settled," he says.

Mr. Mohammad adds that the 1,732 beneficiaries of Chebyuk settlement scheme and the remaining 341 families were identified transparently through public vetting by elders from the Soy and Ndorobo communities.

"The re-settlement task force chaired by former Deputy Provincial Commissioner Mr. Solomon Ouko used elders from the two communities to identify genuine displaced families," he says.

Mr. Mohammad claims that the physical planners had set aside land for recreational activities, health facilities, schools and roads during the survey work.

The provincial administrator says that very soon the ministry of lands will issue title deeds to the beneficiaries.

He expresses optimism that after settling and getting title deeds, the beneficiaries will start serious farming to revive the economy of the area that drastically declined during the militia era.

The task force overseeing the re-settlement process was appointed by president Mwai Kibaki after it emerged that the process was likely to be hijacked by political and tribal interests.

Leaders call for peaceful coexistence in Kenya

From Page 16

initiatives whenever they have their sittings in parliament.

She proposed to KAS to use Amani forum where she is the secretary to help in issues of conflict resolution and urged the Civil Society Organization as well to use the forum as well.

The MP advised people to identify areas that they could do better in and do them properly to reduce overlaps and competitions which exists among particularly the civil society organizations in Kenya.

She urged KAS to identify the gaps and present to her so that she could take them to parliament for the MPs to see what they can do to bridge the gaps.

She finished her speech by saying that she would urge parliamentarians to come up with a bill on conflict resolution, Mr. George Kabongah of the Africa- Peace Forum, outlined the causes of conflict in Nyanza, Western and Rift-Valley based on findings of the research done in 2009. They were:

- Ethnicity - where different ethnic groups disagree and others being stereotyped as thieves, night runners e.t.c. resulting to distrust and hatred

- Poverty and unemployment - lack of opportunities to integrate majority of the population by giving them employment opportunities from the government and the non-state actors as well

- Nature of politics - where the winners takes it all

- Unjust/inequitable distribution of resources - Economically and politically unequal distribution of resources e.g. poor infrastructure in some areas

- Negative colonial history - culture of impunity which existed since the colonial times

- Historical injustices/grievances - some ethnic groups/people were regarded as more superior than others

- Land tenure systems - land allocations and distribution in the Rift Valley and western provinces where there existed semi arid places brought about boundary conflicts

- Lack of sustainable peace building mechanisms - no peace building ministries/bodies were put down in place by the government to help resolve conflicts

Mr. Mannaseh Wepundi also gave a presentation on how to generate consensus towards policy improvement for sustainable peace.



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Internationale Zusammenarbeit



MT. ELGON RESIDENT ASSOCIATION



Kenya



CJPC

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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

Western peace network visits Nyanza

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East Kuria.

In the afternoon heavy rain prevented the delegation visiting Ntimaru and Kegonga Communities who have been involved in many of the conflicts as had been planned.

In the morning of Thursday 31st March the delegation met in Kehacha with the Chief of the location, who is also a youth and is involved in the efforts to bring peace to the area. The Chief explained that a large part of the administration's efforts have focused on peace forum initiatives which have tried to encourage criminals to give up their weapons. Community policing is also being used as a way to connect with those involved in violence and bring them back to a peaceful way of life.

Two village elders, a local resident and pastor, and a prominent female community leader, all from Kehacha, were also present at the meeting. The elders explained the dimensions of the conflicts in Kehacha, explaining that they have mostly occurred between the Kuria sub-clans. They also explained that they have been holding 'Barazas' with local residents to discuss how to address the issues of conflict. We then heard from an elder lady who is helping tackle the problem of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the area. She explained that FGM can lead to increased instances of conflict. Firstly because when girls undergo FGM it can lead to them dropping out of school which makes them more susceptible to being drawn into conflict. Secondly, a girl who has been circumcised can require larger dowry and this means increased cattle rustling.

Then the delegation heard from a local resident pastor who is working with youths formally involved in violence. The pastor explained that often youths are targeted for political reasons to participate in conflicts, and then are left without an income or focus when they are no longer needed by the politicians. The church has tried to offer a way for these young people to repent and become involved in positive community activities. The church program is funded from the Social Services budget and is aimed at providing youth groups with development and income-generating skills.

In the afternoon the delegation met with youths who were being taught about the dangers of FGM. They explained that they had learnt that even if they have undergone FGM it is still important to protect their children from

it.

On the final day of activities, Friday 1st April, the delegation attended a meeting with the Assistant Chief of South Kanyaguok, David Otieno Ongango, and local community leaders, including the youth, bodaboda, community health group and border committee representatives. The delegation was told how the location, which is in Luo-dominated land, borders land traditionally held by the Kisii and Maasai. This has meant the location has been plagued by conflict. Again it has been politicians who have stirred up violent conflicts by encouraging youths to cause unrest.

The community leaders explained that when the youths are no longer needed by the politicians they are left without income, and often turn to stealing and terrorising the community. They have therefore identified youth unemployment as a major causal factor of conflict and crime in the location. Another factor is that, in the past there has been no forum where the Luo, Kisii and Maasai have been able to come together to discuss their disagreements before they turn violent. Community peace initiatives have therefore been focusing on creating a dialogue between the tribes.

The final meeting took place during the afternoon in Rongo Township between the Western Province delegation and local community leaders. The residents of Rongo explained that many of the youths have been players in the conflicts in Rongo, but that it is also youth groups who are working on peacebuilding. One initiative of the youth groups has been to do home



Youths rioting after disputed presidential elections in 2007 general elections.

visits preaching peace. Another is the formation of School Peace Clubs which are present in primary and secondary schools. There have also been Peace Committees formed of members of the neighbouring tribes and who meet on a quarterly basis to discuss any tensions.

The cross-regional visit ended on Saturday 2nd April with the delegation travelling back to their respective locations in Western Province.

Some of the participants of the cross-regional exchange visit expressed their views on the experience:

"The exchange visit has been very much of great help to me generally for it has made me know how to go about any challenge concerning any conflict that can cause violence and also that conflicts vary from different areas." ~ Joyce Isiaho

"The visit has been of great importance to me personally. The experience I have got from Kuria tells me that peace begins with me, with myself as an individual, within my community.

The peacebuilding that has taken place in Kuria has come from the community. I am now more confident that ordinary people like myself can really help resolve conflicts. Before I used to believe that peace came from above, that it is imposed by institutions above the community-level. From the visit I have also learnt to accept people more because I can see that every community has to deal with so many problems relating to conflict. Also it is clear that the problems we have experienced in Teso are similar to what people in Kuria have experienced and that our challenges and desires are very much the same."

~Moses Odikor, Chairman of Central Youth Group- Teso.
Clifford is an intern at the KAS, Kisumu office.

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Massive irrigation project set for Western

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE World Bank will provide Kshs.2.2 billion for the construction of an irrigation project in Lower River Nzoia basin of Western Kenya.

The project, dubbed Lower Nzoia Irrigation Development Project, would be implemented by the National Irrigation Board.

The project is expected to cover 10,000 acres in Ugunja, Siaya district, Alego Usonga and Budalang'i. The project will use gravity to drive water from Ulawe intake point for the benefit of over 40,000 residents.

Speaking recently during the project launch at St. Anne's Bunyala Girls Secondary School, in Budalang'i constituency, Water and Irrigation Minister Mrs. Charity Ngilu said the project would boost food production.

She said the scheme would also provide a solution to floods that have dogged Budalang'i for many years.

A feasibility study, she added, has been conducted and farmers would be able to grow a variety of crops, including maize, sim sim, arrow roots, potatoes, rice, fruits and vegetables for domestic consumption and export.

The Government, Ngilu said, would work with the community to ensure the project is fully implemented.



Irrigation: World Bank will provide for the construction of an irrigation project in Lower River Nzoia basin of Western Kenya.

She said sensitization workshops would be conducted to ensure the funds are properly utilized.

Lands Minister James Orengo, who is also the Ugenya MP, said leaders from the three constituencies would work in unity to ensure

the project is completed.

He said the project would enable farmers grow crops to boost their income.

Alego Usonga MP, Mr. Edwin Yinda, asked leaders to stick to the Memorandum of Understanding to ensure the project reaps maximum

benefits.

He said the project would boost food production and assist farmers venture into agribusiness.

Budalang'i MP, Mr. Ababu Namwamba said the project would enhance peace between communities in the three constituencies.

Nyeri peace ambassadors awarded

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 150 peace ambassadors from Nyeri County have been awarded with certificates after undergoing one-month training on peace.

The ambassadors were awarded with certificates at Information Hall in Nyeri town recently by

Central PC Mr Evans Ogwankwa and the Central Kenya Peace forum Rev Joseph Macharia after successfully finishing the peace building and conflict resolution course.

The peace keepers who are members of the various district peace committees were drawn from sub-location to district lev-

els from the eight districts in the region.

They underwent a vigorous training at Elmolos Resource centre in Nyeri town and at Ibis Hotel in Karatina. Some of the courses they underwent included root causes to conflict, understanding conflict and peace, conflict management, approach to

conflict and dynamics to peace process.

The courses were supported by the provincial administration and Internal Security Ministry, National Steering Committee on Peace and the Central Kenya Peace Forum.

Earlier, the ambassadors who included, youth and middle aged men and women held a procession of a peace caravan around the streets of Nyeri town where they preached the message of peace with message 'Hague or Local Tribunal, Peace is a Must'.

Several NGOs including USAID and Development Alternative Cooperation are supporting the initiative.

"Let us be peacemakers. We want to go to elections when there is peace around the country. We are working together with the forum to ensure that peace prevails before and after elections," said the Deputy PC.

The chairman said the forum has visited many districts and trained the committee members at the grassroots about peace.

Macharia added that they are encouraging exchange programmes among different communities from Nyanza, Rift Valley and Central Kenya.

The Central Kenya peace forum has already held similar training at Kirinyaga County and now will be heading to Murang'a, Nyandarua and Kiambu counties.



Some of the peace ambassadors being awarded certificates by Central deputy PC Mr Evans Ogwankwa (second right) and Central Peace Forum chairman Rev Joseph Macharia (right) at Information hall in Nyeri town. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Meru forest zone rehabilitated

By PETER MUTUKU

COLLABORATION between the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and a community association has led to the rehabilitation of 1,200 hectares of land in Meru Central Forest Zone since 2004.

With the accelerated rate of recovery and suitable climatic conditions, it is anticipated that 10 percent cover will be attained in the forest by 2030.

"We are doing well as the Kenya Forest Service and we have projected to attain four percent by 2012," says Mr Evans Maneno, the Meru Forest Zonal Manager.

The Meru Central Forest Zone covers 86,000 hectares encompassing Imenti South, Meru Central, Imenti North and Buuri Districts. Combined they are part of the expansive Mt Kenya Forest to the East.

Lower Imenti Forest is the smallest, covering 2,462 hectares and the 34,000 hectare Ontulili Forest is the biggest.

The Meru Forest Environmental Conservation and Protection Association (MEFECAP) is the community initiative spearheading the conservation efforts in the forest.

Formed in 2000 as a women's self help group, it was registered as a Community Forest Association (CFA) in 2006 under Zipporah Matumbi after its members were trained by the Kenya Forest Working Group (KFWG).

"We have achieved a lot and registered tremendous growth in our membership which has helped us create awareness to the community," says Ms Matumbi.

Currently, the association has more than 2,000 members and a nursery with 68,000 tree seedlings.

The group has planted trees to rehabilitate more than 150 hectares in the Meru forest.

Apart from nurseries, the group engages in fish farming, rears dairy goats, makes energy saving jikos and is engaged in drip irrigation.

The Meru Green Zone is also supported by the African Development Bank, which has greatly helped MEFECAP to realize its Kshs21 million annual budget.

According to Ms Matumbi, MEFECAP has a forest management plan. "Our target in the community is women who are not always aware of their rights. If rains fail, women are the most affected since they have to walk for long distances looking for water. So we know that if we wish to have enough water, we have an obligation to take care of the forests," she says.

Eastern Kenya conservation zone secretary Edwin Kinyua says Meru Forest has many exotic tree species, such as Cypress, pines, eucalyptus. The main indigenous trees include the Meru Oak, cedar, olea, croton and pruners. In the farms grevalia is the most common tree.

The region receives most rainfall between October and December and comparatively less rain between March and May.

Plans underway to process fish in Kakamega

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government has spent over Kshs380 million to construct over 2,400 fishponds in Western Province during the current financial year.

Western Provincial Fisheries Officer Aggrey Busiega said plans are at an advanced stage to put up a Kshs50 million fish processing plant in Kakamega, as production is set to go up.

Busiega told farmers not to worry about the availability of market for their produce saying the plant will process fish for export.

"The move is geared towards protecting farmers from being exploited by middlemen," said Busiega, who was speaking in Kakamega town. He explained that the Government wants Vihiga, Busia, Kakamega and Bungoma counties to have a place where farmers can sell their fish without involving middlemen.

Busiega added that plans to construct dams in the province are being hampered by lack of land.

He said the ministry could be forced to return money to Treasury if land is not availed by residents.

Assistant minister Manyala Keya and Mumias MP Ben Washiali however said construction of dams in the province is not necessary.

Keya (Gender and Children Affairs) said his Lurambi



Afish pond in Western province.

Photo/File

constituency does not require a dam. "We don't have floods in my constituency and the issue of constructing a dam cannot work," said Keya.

He said that money meant for construction of a dam in his constituency should be used for other development projects.

Washiali said Mumias does not have a place where a dam can be build.

He explained that fishponds in his area should be increased from the current 50 to over 100 arguing that the population of the area was swelling at a high rate.

He said consumption of

fish was high with most traders importing the food from Uganda and Busia County.

Busiega noted that fishponds have provided employment to over 48,000 youths in the province.

He said more jobs are set to be created when the processing plant takes off.

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE International Organization for Migration (IOM) and National AIDS Control Council [NACC] have set up a free 24-hour health care clinic in the heart of Busia Trailer Park on the Kenya/Uganda border.

The health clinic known as Busia Wellness Centre is targeting hard-to-reach population such as truck drivers, civil servants and female sex workers who are particularly prone to HIV/Aids because they engage in risky sexual activities.

According to the organizations Communications Officer Celeste Hibbert, the health needs of the mobile population are currently not being met in Kenya.

The Communication expert said that regular clinics operate at inaccessible times for people who need to access services in such remote

New clinic set up in Busia

locations and at odd hours, adding that as a powerful corrective, over Sh2.5million has been ploughed into the facility that will provide free tuberculosis (TB), malaria and HIV/Aids treatment.

Nurses will be available 24 hours a day and will also offer counseling on HIV.

The municipal council of Busia has embraced the new centre and donated free electricity and water supplies, said the communications officer saying the Wellness Centre was a step in the right direction.

"This will act as a platform for a more comprehensive combination, prevention approach. We need to address structural issues such as condom availability and empower-

ing female sex workers to negotiate safe sex. We also need to address behavioral issues such as overcoming misconceptions surrounding HIV. In addition, we must ensure that those providing clinic services and behavioral interventions are collaborating towards common objectives," Hibbert said.

Hibbert further said Kenya and Ugandan government officials would soon meet to strengthen existing relationships hence providing an opportunity to highlight common health care challenges between the two countries. The officials will agree on a way forward in jointly tackling identified challenges, and work towards offering a common health care package.

Speaking during the official launch of the Wellness Centre recently, Special Programmes PS, Andrew Mondoh, expressed concern at the high HIV/Aids prevalence of 8 per cent in Busia County compared to the national prevalence of 6.3 per cent.

The PS expressed fears saying that this would adversely affect development in the area unless the local community took corrective measures.

Mr Mondoh called for concerted efforts to combat the disease which he said had claimed the lives of youths and parents leaving several child-led households in its wake. He urged locals to go for voluntary counseling and testing.

Defunct colonial market re-opens

By A CORRESPONDENT

THE colonial Matinyani market in Kitui County has been re-opened sixty years after it was shut down due to stagnation.

The market which is located within Kitui Municipality, was started by the colonial government in 1940s but stalled some few years later due to its

inability to serve the residents.

It was officially re-opened recently by the area civic leader Kathukya Munguti and the

locational chief Franklin Paul Nduu in a ceremony that attracted hundreds of people from the Matinyani, Kyangwithya, Nzambani, Kasyala, Tiva, Kabati, Tulia, Miambani and Kwa Vonza among many

other parts of the Kitui County.

Councillor Munguti and Chief Nduu announced that the market has resumed operations and urged local residents to take advantage of the facility and engage in business.

"We appeal to all the people to come and trade their wares including livestock, cereals and vegetables at the market," Mun-

guti and Nduu said.

Chief Nduu said that the Matinyani market had initially been rendered obsolete by the rapid growth of Kitui and Kabati towns that attracted more investors.

"We have decided to revive the market so that it can serve the newly created Matinyani District," Chief Nduu said.

Great Lakes review security situation

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

Representatives from countries classified under Zone 3 of the Great Lakes Region, namely Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia completed a two-day meeting review implementation of a disarmament project initiated in 2006 under the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

The meeting which was held at a Naivasha resort sought to promote human security through tackling the challenges occasioned by illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the said countries.

Among the key resolutions of the meeting was the need to support simultaneous and coordinated disarmament of nomadic pastoralists in possession of illegal arms and resist tendencies that discourage disarmament in the member States. The participants also agreed to meet annually, during which progress reports on tangible actions taken by the respective member states and stakeholders will be discussed.

The conference was attended by ministers in charge of disarmament from Kenya (Mr. Orwa Ojode, Assistant Minister for Internal Security), Uganda (Mr. Jeje Odongo, Minister of State for Defence) and Sudan (Mr. Gier Chuang Aluong, the Minister of Internal Affairs of South Sudan and Mr. Kwong Danhier, the State Minister of Interior of the Republic of Sudan).

The Ethiopian delegation was led by Mr. Sisay Melese, Director of Culture of Peace in the Ministry of Federal Affairs.

Other participants included members of parliament, senior government officials, community, religious, business, civil society, women and youth leaders.

During the meeting, community leaders were sensitized on the objectives and the road map of the project with a view to creating ownership and securing the support of the entire leadership in the member states, particularly the traditional and political leaders, in implementing the project.

EAC signs funding deal for Lake Victoria

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE East African Community (EAC) has signed Grant Protocol agreement worth \$108 million (Kshs.9.1 billion) with the African Development Fund to finance the second phase of the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Programme.

The programme seeks to contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods and health of communities living in and around the Lake Victoria basin through the reversal of the pollution of the lake and ensuring sustainable water supply and sanitation infrastructure.

It will specifically reduce pollution in the lake through improvement of the water supply

and sanitation infrastructure of selected towns whose water resources are within the basin.

The programme will involve water supply; hygiene and environmental sanitation; urban drainage improvement; capacity building and project management.

Fifteen secondary towns in the Lake Victoria Basin will directly benefit from the Programme. These are Muyinga, Kayanza and Ngozi in Burundi; Kericho, Keroka and Isebania-Sirari in Kenya; Nyagatare, Kyonza and Nyanza in Rwanda; Geita, Sengerema and Nansio in Tanzania; as well as Mayuge, Ntungamo and the Bwama-Kayabwe-Bukakata cluster in Uganda.

The Agreement was signed by the Secretary General of the

East African Community, Amb. Juma Opio-omonding, Officer-in-Charge of the African Development Bank (Kenya).

The signing ceremony held at the bank's Field Office in Nairobi was attended by the Executive Secretary of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission, Dr. Tom Okurut.

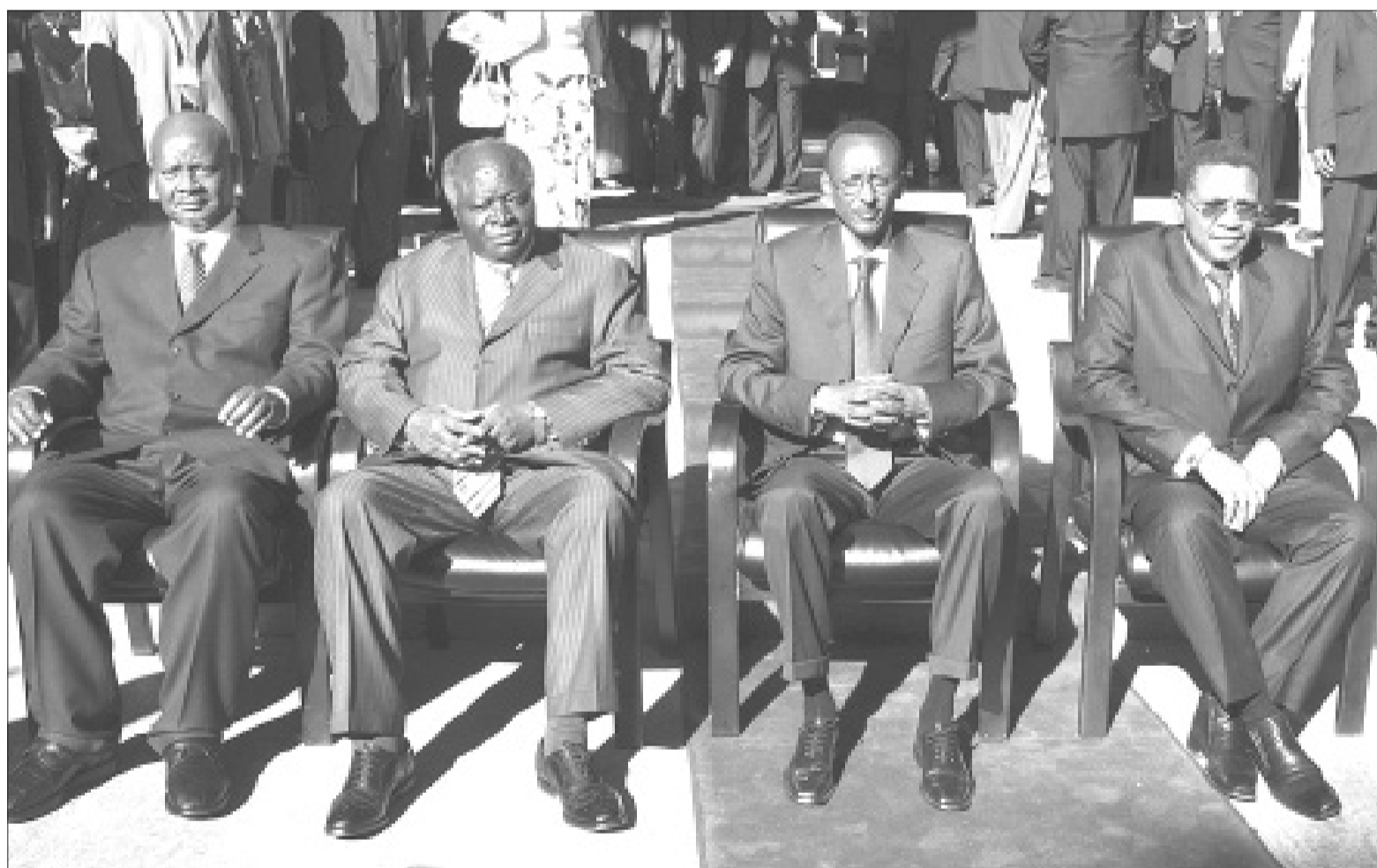
The Protocol for the Sustainable Development of the Lake Victoria Basin tasks the Commission's secretariat to mobilize resources for the implementation of sustainable development projects and programmes.

The African Development Fund will contribute US\$108 million (89.07 per cent) while the five Partner States will contribute US\$13 million (10.93 per cent).

The Initiative seeks to demon-

strate that the Millennium Development Goal of ensuring environmental sustainability is achieved in a relatively short time and that investments can be sustained over the long term by effectively integrating physical infrastructure works, training and capacity building into a balanced and cohesive programme of interventions.

Mr. Mwapachu hailed the signing of the agreement as a historical milestone in the resource mobilization endeavours of the East African Community, while Mr. Omondung noted that the programme offers a unique opportunity for the five EAC Partner States to strengthen their co-operation and share important experiences in safe water supplies and improvement of sanitation.



Some of the East African Community Heads of State in a group photograph. Photo/File

Nyong'o set to launch new center

By PETER MUTUKU

A CENTRE of excellence for training workers in the reproductive health sector is set to be launched at the Kenya Medical Training Centre (KMTC) in Kitui.

The Minister for Medical Services Prof Anyang Nyong'o will launch the centre which is meant to strengthen the development of the human resource needed to improve the delivery of healthcare services, especially in the reproductive health and family planning.

The establishment of the centre is a joint initiative by the USAID Capacity Kenya project, KMTC and the Ministry of Medical Services, which have been working on a five year project since 2009 to strengthen training systems in order to ensure better human resource for the health care sector.

The project hopes to achieve this through development of pre-service, in-service education and continuing professional development programs at KMTC.

The Principal of the KMTC Kitui campus, Mr. Justus Kioko is optimistic that the new venture will greatly impact on the training of personnel for the healthcare sector.

Key among the achievements, Mr. Kioko said was the revision in May 2010 of the Reproductive Health curriculum by a cross section of stakeholders into a format appropriate for distance learning.

The centre is helping seal the gaps identified in the healthcare training system that prevented KMTC graduates from delivering high quality healthcare services. These gaps were identified in a countrywide Performance Needs Assessment carried out in the Kenya Health sector before the training started.

The Survey gave a wide range of recommendations on how the health training systems in Kenya could be improved to respond to current and future needs and to contribute to the achievement of Vision 2030.

Capacity Kenya project also supported the redesign of the Reproductive Health/Family Planning (RH/FP) modules using innovative educational teaching strategies.

Capacity Kenya is a USAID funded project led by Intra Health International, Inc and implemented with partners that include the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), Deloitte, Management Sciences for Health (MSH) and Training Resources Group (TRG).

USA gives massive support to youth programs

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE US government has rolled out a youth programme dubbed 'Yes Youth Can' designed to empower young people achieve greater voice in national reform and generate new means of livelihoods.

The 'Yes Youth Can' will be launched in all 47 counties. The initiative which represents a \$45 million (Kshs.3.5 billion) investment in present and future youth forms the largest USAid youth-empowerment programme around the world.

US Ambassador to Kenya, Mr. Michael Ranneberger, who attended the launch of the Coast region version in Kilifi and Taita-Taveta counties, said a key component of the initiative would be a youth-managed fund (Youth Innovate for Change Fund) to support grassroots community development and

empowerment projects implemented by youth and youth-serving organizations. Mr. Ranneberger said the programme seeks to support quick-impact projects to promote youth voices on national issues, particularly the reform process, through independent grassroots organizations and activities.

He said the youth project, which was first launched in Bungoma County, will be spread to all corners of the country. He said the US embassy was not stirring discontent among the youth, saying the youth play a key role in shaping a country's destiny and need to be empowered to act responsibly.

He said the project will be carried out through business micro-enterprises that create jobs for the youth by empowering and enhancing participation in the democratization process through civic edu-

cation programmes.

The envoy said the fund which has the support of US President Barack Obama will be owned by the youth with the aim of expanding economic opportunities for them across the country.

The envoy said the youth were manipulated by politicians in the 2007/2008 post-election violence, adding that there was need to empower young people economically and politically to insulate them from possible manipulation in future.

The ambassador said impunity, negative ethnicity and poverty were among factors exploited by the politicians and said his government was committed to working closely with the youth to effect peaceful change. "We should not underestimate the youth come 2012 since about 4 million new voters mostly young people will

come on board and will definitely demand change and we want to ensure that change is done peacefully as violence is counterproductive," he said.

The envoy said Kenya has great opportunity for youth development and asked young people to actively participate in the on-going peace, reconciliation and justice process to entrench reforms and cited the enactment of the National Youth Policy, 2006, the establishment of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, the National Youth Council Act 2009 and the promulgation of the new constitution in August 2010.

He said the youth should be at the forefront for peaceful change and ensure implementation of the new Constitution get priority since it forms the centerpiece of the reform agenda.

Implementing the new constitution in letter and spirit will establish a framework to end the culture of impunity, to mitigate negative ethnicity, to close the huge gap of inequality and promote development for the well-being of all Kenyans, said the envoy.

The chairman of the National Youth Forum, Mr. Hassan ole Nado, hailed the youth initiative and urged young people to overcome negative tribalism, corruption and the culture of impunity. He said the youth should elect leaders on account of their development record and integrity.

He said the national umbrella body for young people will strive to bridge gaps and build a culture of national unity and solidarity by creating inter-ethnic, inter-class and inter-religious tolerance and trust through dialogue and joint action for youth across the country.

Lodge donates food to Kwale children

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE drought stricken Kwale County has received therapeutic and supplementary foods for children under five years in order to boost their nutrition.

Children in Kinango District, the driest part of the county, will now benefit from the 12 tones of Unimax from the Leisure Lodge Resort to curb malnutrition. Unimax is a high nutrient porridge mix used to check moderate and acute malnutrition. The supplementary food is normally given to children aged less than five years, breastfeeding and expectant mothers. The Kenya Red Cross Society is currently distributing the supplementary food to 19 schools in Kinango for children in nursery schools to supplement whatever food they get at home to keep malnutrition at bay.

Pregnant women and lactating mothers will also get the supplement from six centres. These centres are at health facilities as the mothers need to be screened to identify the extent of malnutrition.

Those mothers already suffering from malnutrition and those at risk are given the supplementary mix to keep them and their babies healthy.

Kwale Red Cross coordinator Esha Salim says that the Unimax distribution is targeting areas where the monthly relief food from the World Food Organization (WFP) does not reach. She said that the relief food from WFP has targeting criteria which restricts its distribution. "As a result, not all areas have a food distribution centres and not all people are considered eligible for relief food," she said.

She, however, adds that in an area with a poverty index of 75 per cent, almost all community members require food especially after a crop failure due to inadequate rainfall last year. In the last food index survey carried out in 2009,

Kinango was ranked 202 out of the 210 constituencies. With the onset of the long rains expected at the end of March the prevalence among children, pregnant and lactating mothers is bound to increase before there is food ready to eat on the farms. Vigurungani Dispensary, one of the Unimax distribution centres, has been allotted 51 bags of the porridge mix.

However, expectant mothers who through the health facility with babies on their backs need more than the 1,275 kg of flour. Amina Mohammed, a Red Cross nutritionist in charge of the supplementary feeding programme in Kwale County, says that it would take about 105 bags of Unimax to meet the nutritional needs of Vigurungani location.

This area was chosen as a centre because it has consistently high malnutrition rates all year round. According to the current Drought Monitoring Bulletin for the county, 8.2 per cent of children less than five years in Vigurungani suffer from malnutrition. This is up from 8.1 per cent in January.

The Kinango Nutrition Officer Margaret Kimeu concurs with her Red Cross counterpart. She says that data received from health facilities in the district shows that the number of children suffering from moderate malnutrition has increased from 800 in December last year to 1,300 currently.

"These children are currently on out-patient treatment, where they are on a prescription of therapeutic and supplementary foods," she said. "Once malnutrition becomes severe, children often develop other health complications as a result of a lowered immunity. The children require hospital admission for their situation to be monitored closely."

Children admissions have increased from an average of between one and two a month from August to December last



Mothers waiting to get supplementary porridge flour for the children. Photo/File

year to five currently.

Ms. Kimeu says not all mothers are able to walk the long distances to health centres to have their children's growth monitored to arrest malnutrition early.

She says some mothers can only take one child to hospital, leaving the other hungry ones at home. Mothers with more than one child under the age of five years cannot carry them all to hospital at once.

Ms. Kimeu says the area has no cash crop that can be sold in return for money to buy food. This leaves the children vulnerable as they are the last ones to be

fed and get diluted porridge that cannot support growth. And since breast milk depends on the quantity and quality of the mother's food, breastfeeding babies are weaned early.

Both nutritionists say that even with the Unimax, some children still take long to recover from malnutrition. They say that investigations revealed that the food given for the baby is shared out among the entire family, thus reducing the por-

tions the children require to regain their health.

Amina said food is distributed in portions of 7.5 kg per person for a month. The recipients also get pure vegetable oil to boost energy. The food should be taken three to four times daily for the desired results.

Ms. Kimeu says there is need for intense education to ensure parents do not consume their children's food.

Attacks on journalists still high

By HENRY OWINO

THE Committee to Protect Journalist (CPJ) has expressed concern about the high number of journalists being attacked by governments around the world.

Director of CPJ-Africa Tom Rhodes, said coming hot on the heels of the peaceful revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia, the release of its annual report could not have come at a better time. The report Attacks On The Press in 2010, not only details the threats to journalists but also reveals the link between bad governance and corruption and absence of press freedom.

Mr Rhodes observed that everywhere in Africa, governments are increasingly exercising control in response to media exposes about corruption, nepotism and bad governance. He said except for legitimate exceptions, it has been demonstrated that a country is best served if the media is free and relevant government information is made public.

"Experts have observed that countries that have allowed open access to information tend not only to have encountered few, if any, problems with press freedom, but have also consistently scored well in press freedom and governance rankings," said Mr. Rhodes.

It is testament of non-progressive forces in government that Kenya should feature in the league of regimes that still suppress the media. The case against Star newspaper reporters, Andrew Teyie and Kamore Maina that was recently concluded, attests to the State's penchant to clamp the media.

Standard reporter Evelyn Kwamboka, who in 2006 became the first Kenyan journalist to be ordered by a court to reveal her sources, was harassed just as viciously until a superior judge reversed the ruling. Such tactics are meant to undercut access to information by the media by intimidating both journalists

and their sources.

Journalists seeking access to information are routinely confronted with bureaucratic procedures and measures aimed at concealing information under the pretext of public ethics, national security and other elastic terms that wrongly restrict the public's right to know.

Kenya Union of Journalists Secretary General Jared Obuya, said the government is actively seeking to re-introduce media control through the judiciary and the Judicial Service Commission, contrary to provisions in the new Constitution.

Mr Obuya said the new Constitution states that the "State shall not exercise control over, or interfere with, any person engaged in broadcasting, the production or circulation of any publication or the dissemination of information by any media".

The KUJ Secretary General added that by enacting the Media Bill 2010, the government will have effectively reversed the fundamental gains made in new Constitution. The Bill, proposed by the Ministry of Information and Communication, does away with the principle of self-regulation and places media regulation under another arm of the government, the Judiciary.

The new Bill borrowed heavily from the Media Act 2007, which set up a media council controlled by the industry that proposes a council on which citizenship and a university degree are the only qualifications for one to sit in.

Under the current Act, stakeholders in the media industry appointed respected colleagues in the profession to sit on the Media Council of Kenya. The council, among other things, ensures professional standards are adhered to and mediates or arbitrates disputes. This is in tandem with the principle of self-regulation.

The changes to the media act, expected to go to Parliament any time soon,

give sweeping powers to the Chief Justice to appoint members of the statutory Media Council and indirectly supervise its operations.

Mr. Tervil Okoko of the Eastern African Journalist Association (EAJA), said the government's claim of seeking to enhance the Council's independence rings hollow in light of the excessive powers over the Council proposed for the Chief Justice and Judicial Service Commission, and the suppression of the profession's voices currently in the Council.

Mr. Okoko added that the amendments would in effect subject journalists to control by the Judiciary, thereby undermining the spirit and letter of the new Constitution which unequivocally protects freedoms of the media and citizens' right to uncensored information.

Mr Okoko said an envisaged Media Council would in effect be another unnecessary appendage of the Judiciary.

The EAJA Chairman pointed out that with the lines between reformers and anti reform forces becoming increasingly blurred, the media is the sole credible voice against corruption, injustice and bad governance. He said the current maneuvers to muzzle the media should be understood in this context.

"Laws like the one being proposed show that we are not out of the woods yet when it comes to media freedom the opposite is the case," said Mr. Okoko.

Mr. Teyie, the investigative editor of The Star said bureaucrats have in the past undermined civil society campaigns for a freedom of information law which, fortunately, is now entrenched in the Constitution.

Mr. Teyie said without open access to information, the media loses its watchdog role over the government thereby putting public interests and democracy into jeopardy thus promoting the culture of impunity.

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Funds for upgrading schools set aside

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE government has set aside Kshs700 million to be used in the ongoing process of identifying schools to be elevated to national schools.

Speaking at Nairobi school, Education Permanent Secretary Prof. James Ole Kiyiapi clarified that although the process is ongoing; no schools have been identified yet as had been reported in a section of the local dailies.

"This is not a ministry project. We will work hand in hand with people in the counties. Every county will select their own panel to look into the matter and then forward the two schools to the ministry to implement. So far no names have been forwarded"

Recently, Bondo Member of Parliament (MP) Oburu Odinga was complaining in one of the vernacular FM radio that the government is intending to elevate Maranda High School to become a national school, a move that he termed as political.

The area Member of Parliament described Maranda as a school for the 'people'. His meaning of the phrase 'a school of the people' according to political analysts probably means the Luo community.

Similar resistance has been witnessed where the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) vowed to reject the move to elevate Friends School Kamusinga, Kakamega High, St Peters Mumias, Lugulu Girls and Butere Girls to national levels.

ACK bishops Joseph Wasonga and Ben Salalah said the Government should consult with the stakeholders before implementing the plan.

The two explained that the church wants to know how surrounding communities will benefit from 85 per cent



A SECONDARY SCHOOL: The process to identify some schools to be elevated to national schools is ongoing, but no schools have been identified yet as had been reported in a section of the local dailies.

of admissions to Form One when the schools are elevated to national level.

"We cannot accept to lose our allocation of 85 per cent when we know very well that it is difficult to get a Form One chance in national schools," said Salalah of Mumias ACK Diocese.

Salalah said local communities have worked hard to invest in the best performing schools earmarked for elevation. He added that it would be unfair if their Form One slots will not be guaranteed every year.

Salalah said Kakamega County risk losing 750 Form One chances that the community enjoys out of the quarter system if Kakamega High, St Peters Mumias and Butere Girls will

be elevated to the national level.

The bishops who made the remarks in Kakamega town said the trend by the Government of converting already established institutions should be discarded.

Wasonga of Maseno West Diocese explained that Western and Nyanza provinces have already lost some institutions after they were converted from tertiary training colleges to university campuses. He said the trend should not be extended to the best performing provincial schools.

Secondary School Head Teachers Association Butere/Mumias regional coordinator Hezekiah Akang'o said consultations should be made to avoid confrontations.

Akang'o said the Government should allow communities to select schools they want to be elevated.

St Peters Mumias High School Principal Godfrey Owuor said he has no problem with the school being elevated to national status.

He noted that over Kshs100 million is required to equip the school with relevant facilities if it has to meet national standards.

MPs from Bungoma County led by suspended Foreign Affairs minister Moses Wetangula, assistant minister Bifwoli Wakoli and Eseli Simiyu vowed to block the elevation of Friend School Kamusinga and Lugulu Girls.

The three argued that locals have invested heavily in the two schools.

Kilifi tree planting gets major boost

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

A RECENT downpour in Bahari and parts of Ganze districts in Kilifi County provided water to irrigate over 50,000 tree seedlings that were planted through Kazi kwa Vijana Programme.

The ministries of Youth Affairs and Sports and Environment and the Kenya Forest Service were given Kshs.600,000 and Kshs.800,000 respectively, while Kilifi Town Council received Kshs.1 million for various projects, including tree planting.

The Kilifi County KFS manager Christopher Maina told a district executive committee meeting at the DC's boardroom that some seedlings had shown signs of withering after a three-month drought.

He said the recent rains in parts of the county had resurrected the seedlings whose survival rate could rise to 85 cent.

Mr. Maina said his department was given a target to plant 100,000 tree seedlings 50,000 of which were planted 12 months ago.

He said over 100 jobs were created through the employment of youths to tend to nurseries and centres that were earmarked for tree planting.

He said 10,000 seedlings were planted at 30 Government institutions, such as public schools, health centres and dispensaries.

Among the beneficiaries included Junju, Mtepeni, Maweni, Konmjora and Roka primary schools.

Others were Roka, Tezo, Mtondia and Takaungu health facilities and five other uncovered quarries in Bofa in the outskirts of Kilifi town.

Meanwhile, fish has become a scarce commodity in Kilifi town and its environs, causing sharp rise in prices. The Kilifi Town Beach Management Unit chairman, Mr. Abdul Aziz, said fishermen were experiencing low catch.

Child labor cases down in Kenya — ILO

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

CHILD Labour situation in the country has reduced significantly following the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) eight years ago, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has said.

According to a recent survey by ILO, the number of working children has decreased almost by half. The report added that while data is not available, it is expected that the introduction of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008, would continue to improve enrollment, thus

reduce child labour even further.

Nevertheless, the report says at least 773,000 children are still working, with more than 65 per cent of them out of school.

According to ILO, the government's measures to reduce poverty through the strengthening of the policy framework and the introduction of devolved and revolving development funds and affordable loans have resulted in improved living conditions and more employment opportunities for many poor families.

On child labour in Busia district Ms Tasian Mutsotso, a contact person of the ILO, said two NGOs, namely Human Support Organization (HUSO) and the International Child Support (ICS) have been mandated to undertake capacity building, awareness creation and mainstreaming of child labour issues in the development agenda of the district under the auspices of ILO.

The ILO official said that by the end of the five-year project, 580 children in the district will have been reached with 280 withdrawn and 300 prevented from the worst forms of child labour. Their families will also be provided with income generating activities.

The District Child Labour Committee in collaboration with the Lo-

cal Child Labour Committee will identify at least 70 children from the 280 withdrawn for skills training, counseling, legal aid and health services in preparation for integration into skills or vocational training.

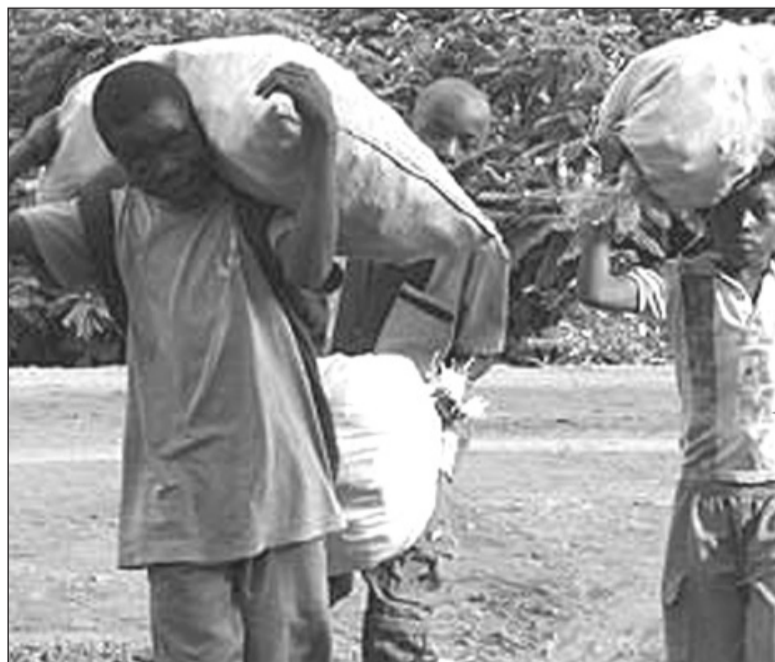
ILO will also lobby local authorities and other levels of governance to include Child Labour issues in their policies and programmes.

The ILO representative at the same time said that the district and locational child labour committees will be strengthened or constituted, and the district stakeholders trained on understanding child rights, HIV/Aids and child labour monitoring.

Among other activities to be undertaken include the creation and support of Child Rights Clubs and youth groups.

Ms Mutsotso added that ILO in collaboration with the Government and other players had embarked on a three-year project in Busia, Kilifi and Kitui counties where child labour is widespread with the aim of eradicating it by prevention, renewal and protection of children who have so far been withdrawn from the labour market and assist them to resume school.

The official also said 100 families will be supported to access social economic safety nets.



Child Labour has reduced significantly following the introduction of Free Primary Education.

Ministry to build more dams in the country

By TITUS MAERO

THE Ministry of Water and Irrigation plans to construct 26 dams in different parts of the country at a cost of Kshs 70 billion.

Permanent Secretary Engineer David Stower says that the move was part of an effort to scale up existing water points in order to cushion the country from the adverse weather conditions.

"The prevailing water shortages caused by the prolonged period of draught calls for the implementation of a clear strategy to harness rain water and ground water," he added.

The PS further said the Ministry with support from Treasury had managed to negotiate technical support valued at Kshs600 million from German Government which will go towards the training of experts in dam construction to oversee the implementation of the programme at the grass root level.

In a speech read on his behalf by Engineer Peter Mangiti, who is a Director of Land Reclamation and Head of Donor Co-ordination Unit, during the Annual Lake Victoria North Water Services Board (LVWSB) meeting held at the Kakamega Golf Hotel, Engineer Stower said the country will be secure from the effects of climate change and the resultant water shortage if these dams are constructed.

Stower also said the ministry



DAM: Ministry of Water and Irrigation has plans to construct 26 dams in different parts of the country.

with the support of the Japanese Government is undertaking the preparation of a National Water Master Plan to be ready in about a year saying this would provide a solid platform for all the reforms planned in the water sector.

The PS further said the government initiated water sector reforms

in 2003 with the aim of increasing accessibility to water and sanitation services to Kenyans and ensuring better quality services to those already being served.

He, however, said challenges mainly due to increased population, unplanned settlements in urban areas, dwindling water sources capaci-

ties, deteriorating quality of available water sources are rampant.

Stower said these challenges are compounded by huge capital investments required for the development of water services projects and the global effects on climate change such as unpredictable weather patterns.

State has released roads funds to constituencies

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government has finally released the final tranche of Kshs400 million for rehabilitation of roads in constituencies. The money has been wired to bank accounts of Constituency Roads Committees.

Each constituency has received Kshs20 million out of the Kshs27 million the Government allocates to constituencies every financial year. The first tranche of Kshs7 million had been disbursed last year and most MPs had exhausted the money.

Parliamentary Transport Committee Chairman David Were said MPs who do not receive their share of the funds should alert his committee.

"I have received the money for my Matungu constituency. Any MP who does not get the money should notify the committee. We want Kenyan roads in rural areas to be in good condition," added Were. He explained that his committee wants the money to be used immediately to avoid a situation where the District Roads officers return the funds to the Treasury.

The legislator was speaking at Munanga Primary School in his Matungu constituency while issuing a Constituency Development Fund (CDF) cheque. Civic leaders who included Okello Ngenge and the CDF Tender Committee Chairman Rashid Omusotsi accompanied him.

Were asked MPs to give out tenders immediately, adding that the Kenya Rural Roads Authority and the Kenya Urban Roads Authority officials should not delay in the awarding construction jobs to qualified applicants.

Were also said his Committee wants the Government to allocate more funds for the renovation and expansion of airstrips and airports.

Were said the money should be factored in this year's National Budget. He said the Minister for Transport Amos Kimunya should ensure more resources are channeled to airports.

Were announced that his committee will convene a meeting with Kenya Airports Authority, Kenya Civil Aviation Authority and senior Government officers to explore ways of improving emergency response in airports.

Irrigation project to create 80,000 jobs

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

A KENYA shillings 2.3 billion irrigation project funded by the World Bank is expected to create some 80,000 jobs for youths in Budalang'i District when it is completed.

During its launch recently, Water Minister Charity Ngilu urged the residents to support the project to be undertaken along the lower parts of River Nzoia since it will benefit them in the long run.

The Minister said co-operation from the residents would ensure the project achieves its intended objectives, which include prevention floods and improving the areas food security.

Lands minister James Orengo, Budalangi MP Ababu Namwamba, Alego MP Edwin Yinda and former Makadara MP Reuben Ndolo attended the ceremony held at Busagwa Secondary School. Mr Orengo assured those who own land where the project will be undertaken that they will be fully compensated by the government.

World Bank rescues Kazi Kwa Vijana

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government is set to revive the Kazi Kwa Vijana initiative at cost of Kshs7 billion, assistant minister in the Office of the Prime Minister Alfred Khangati has disclosed.

Khang'ati said the World Bank in collaboration with the Government will implement the programme in 16 counties that are faced with high levels

of poverty.

The assistant minister said Prime Minister Raila Odinga will launch the programme next month.

Some of the counties selected to benefit from the programme include Bungoma, Kitui and Lamu.

He explained that the programme aims at rehabilitating roads and other structures while creating employment

for young people.

He said already Kshs600 million has been disbursed to some institutions, which include local authorities, before the official launch.

The assistant minister made the remarks at Masinde Muliro Stadium in Bungoma town during the official opening of a meeting of Western Provincial Primary Schools Head Teachers Association.



Government is set to revive Kazi Kwa Vijana programme.

Bureti set to build new pineapple factory

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

PLANS are underway to construct a pineapple factory in Bureti district at a cost of Kshs.86 million.

The area MP who is also the minister for Roads, Mr. Franklin Bett, says donors have raised the funds and construction work is expected to start as soon as the tendering procedure is completed.

Speaking in Kericho recently, Mr. Bett said the factory would be a major relief to Bureti and Belgut pineapple farmers who were currently selling their pineapples at throw-away prices by the roadsides.

Mr. Bett said the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) had offered a Kshs.20 million grant, while the Industrial Commercial and Development Corporation (ICDC) had pledged Kshs.50 million for the project.

He said the Ministry of Industrialisation is expected to give Kshs.6 million towards the factory to be built at Roret Division, which is the major pineapple growing area.

He said the Constituency Development Fund will give out Kshs10 million for the construction of the plant.

Construction of the factory has been promised to farmers by former Bureti MPs since independence.

Once the factory becomes fully operational, the region is expected to develop faster with the availability of more employment opportunities, leading to more income for residents.

Lack of a reliable market has been a major handicap for pineapple growers in Bureti and Belgut constituencies. There are over 1,860 hectares under pineapple in Bureti constituency alone, and more farmers are expected to join the lucrative business once the factory is completed.

"The much awaited factory is expected to be built in the next two



Pineapple: Plans are underway to construct a pineapple factory.

months. This will undoubtedly be a major relief to fruit farmers who have over the years requested for the construction of such a factory in the area," said Mr. Bett.

The Bureti District Agriculture Officer, Mr. Odoyo Bittar, said the area produces 93,000 tones of pineapple annually. Most of the produce is sold locally by growers, while some of the fruits rot in farms for lack of reliable market.

"There is an enormous potential for the crop and the factory will boost production and improve the standards of living for the farmers," said Mr. Odoyo.

Ms. Grace Rono, a farmer, said they offload mature fruits for between Kshs.5 and Kshs.15 at the farm level.

When the fruits are taken to trading centres and roadsides between Kericho-Sotik, and Kericho-Kisii towns, they sell one for Kshs.20.

In major towns such as Kericho and Bomet, one mature pineapple goes for up to Kshs.50.

In times of glut, however, the prices normally drop to Kshs.10 or Kshs.5 per ripe fruit. The low prices have demoralized farmers and the new factory is expected to add value to the investment.

Joseph Rono, a farmer at Kapkisiara location, Roret Division, Bureti District, told The Link the factory would be a welcome gesture. He, however, urged stakeholders to hasten construction of the plant.

Farmers in Bureti have already

formed a giant Roret Horticultural Co-operative Society that is anticipated to bring together all pineapple growers.

More fruit factories are expected to tap into the massive potential for fruit farming. A passion fruit factory that served farmers around Sotik town has since collapsed.

The factory used to serve passion fruit farmers in the former larger Kericho and neighbouring Kisii districts. Farmers used to realize huge profits from the sale of the fruits and many are still nostalgic after the factory's collapse along with a cooperative society that managed it.

Area leaders say the proposed factory is expected to be placed under professional management so as to benefit the farmers.

Mumias power project gets big boost

By JOEL JUMA

THE World Bank in collaboration with the Government has earmarked Kshs58 million to finance rural electrification programmes in Mumias District, Kakamega County.

Mumias MP Ben Washiali said the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) is already on the ground undertaking survey works.

Washiali noted that the project will be implemented in South Wanga, East Wanga and Mumias town.

"All market centres will be supplied with electricity in an effort to improve the economy of locals," he added.

Washiali said primary and secondary schools will be included in the programme.

The MP made the remarks during an inspection of Constituency Development Fund funded projects in his Mumias constituency.

New incinerator installed in Kisii hospital

By BOB OMBATI

AN ultra modern incinerator has been installed at Kisii level five hospital, in a bid to manage biomedical wastes, protect the environment and offer effective and efficient services to members of the public.

Commissioning the machine, Gusii region Director of Medical Services Officer, Dr Erick Abunga said the machine, imported from Britain cost the facility Kshs. 17.5million and has capacity to burn 100 kilogrammes of garbage per hour.

Dr. Abunga urged the hospital staff to separate the clinical waste from non clinical ones for incineration, adding the acquisition of the machine follows the elevation of the facility from level four to a referral facility hence need to expand its facilities to cope with the demand.

The hospital Medical Superintendent, Dr. Geoffrey Otomu said the machine, supplied by Plenser limited, a Kenyan company is friendly to the environment, stressing it is smokeless since the waste and the smoke

are burnt exhaustively at temperatures ranging between 800 to 900 degrees.

The medical superintendent, flanked by area Public Health Officer, Francis Makau said the incinerator would help manage wastes generated in wards by patients and help protect and control cross infection to staff members and other stakeholders visiting the hospital.

Otomu disclosed that the hospital will partner with private hospitals and clinics to have their wastes incinerated at the hospital at a small fee to

reduce dumping the hazardous wastes along the road sides and other filled up dump sites, and hence polluting the environment.

The Officer said the 450 bed capacity hospital attends to 2000 in patients and 15000 out patients monthly and therefore generated a lot of waste which could not be managed by the facility's small and outdated incinerator.

Plensers Managing Director, Moses Kamau said the incinerator meets the National Environment management Authority (NEMA)

requirements, adding it reduces the volume of wastes by 95 percent and does not emit smoke.

Kamau said the incinerator can operate for a maximum of 10 hours a day and burn between 600 and 800 kilogrammes of wastes, stressing it can operate for 15 years before undergoing a major repair.

He said the country has about 17 such modern incinerators in various public and private hospitals and urged more hospitals to acquire them to manage their wastes to keep the environment clean.

By TITUS MAERO

KU launches student shuttle bus

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 Kshs15 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, the official said to curb cases of members of the public sneaking into the shuttle buses, students have been provided with identification cards to be scrutinized before boarding the buses by contracted private security officers.

He said 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.

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 Bachelor of Science Degree in Military studies.

This followed competitive bidding process which was initiated by the Department of Defense (DOD) and where KU beat other public universities to win the bid.

Amukoa shows the way in food production

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

WHEN John Amukoa, 58, retired from the civil service in the year 2008 and opted to venture into full-time large scale farming, little did he know that his project would in the long run turn out to be the sole supplier of various farm produce in the entire Busia County and the neighbouring counties.

Amukoa who hails from Emuhaya constituency in the Vihiga county and is currently residing at Burumba village within Busia municipality, said during an exclusive interview with The Link at his three acre farm at Buringala village in Bukhaya West location recently, that farming had been his long-time childhood dream taking into consideration the fact that his own father was himself a prominent farmer.

“At my three acre farm, I have set aside a portion of land where I have planted Napier grass for my grade cows and the remaining portion for other crops namely Avocado, onion, tomatoes, beans, vegetables which include Sukuma wiki. I also intend to introduce pineapples before the year comes to a close, Amukoa said, adding that he is producing large quantities of the same food crops which he sells to the businessmen in the far flung areas of Mumias, Webuye and Kisumu counties among others.

The retired civil servant-turned farmer says he was drawn into full-time large scale farming when he realized that almost three quarters of the residents of Busia County are engaged in cross border trade at the expense of farming hence leading to the high poverty level which currently stands at 68percent.

“I opted to venture into farming when I came to realize that the residents of Busia especially the businessmen had ventured into the lucrative cross border business at the expense of agriculture which is the backbone of the economy of our nation,” said Amukoa, adding that he wanted to take advantage of their negative attitude towards farming to ensure he is producing enough to sustain his family and even have surplus which he would sell to consumers from outside Busia and earn some cash from the



Busia prominent farmer John Amukoa at his farm at Buringala village in Busia County.

Photo/Gilbert Ochieng

same.

Unlike other farmers who depend wholly on fertilizers manufactured from chemicals, Amukoa says he preferred applying pure organic manure which he generates from his zero-grazing unit.

“I prefer applying pure organic manure which I derive from my zero-grazing unit because it has no chemical content and therefore best suited for production of quality and disease-free produce which has become the darling of most buyers in the county who flock to my farm in droves to buy bananas and other crops,” Amukoa said.

The model farmer at the same time said he invested his retirement benefits into farming adding that He has not had access to any loan facility.

“With time, I am considering selling my farm produce via the internet as soon as the funds are made available so that I can be able to reach as many customers as possible,” said Amukoa, adding that since he ventured into farming about four years ago, his lifestyle and that of

his family has changed a great deal dispelling his initial fear that he would lead a miserable life after retirement.

He at the same time said that the venture is more than a handshake because it has enabled him to feed, clothe and educate his children. The farmer attributed the high poverty level in the Busia County to the negative attitudes of the residents towards agriculture despite the fact that the region is blessed with adequate amount of rainfall and fertile soils.

“The only sure way out of the high poverty level in the county is to take an active part in farming so as to avoid over-reliance on maize and other cereals such as beans, millet, cassava and sorghum from Uganda,” he said, adding that the same will in the long run help alleviate food poverty.

The model farmer at the same time said he is working closely with the department of agriculture which he said has been sending local farmers to his farm so that they can be able to learn more about modern farming techniques

and apply the same on their respective farms to produce quality farm produce.

Apart from actively participating in farming, the model farmer operates an Agrovet Shop that deals in agro-chemicals, veterinary, Artificial Insemination (AI) services as well as farm inputs.

The Agrovet shop also sells chick mash, growers mash, layers mash, broiler crumbs/pellets and dairy meal among others. The model farmer expressed concern over some challenges which he said had impacted negatively on his ambitious project.

“In my endeavor to curb food insecurity in the county, I have been facing a number of challenges which may range from the prolonged period of drought and banana diseases which has drastically reduced my yield.

However, he said he is planning to embark on the sinking of boreholes and install sprinkler irrigation at his farm which would come in handy during the drought hence assuring continuous supply of water to his banana plantation.

Coast farmers receive seeds from Red Cross

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) has started distributing seeds to farmers in Coast Province following the onset of rains.

There was jubilation at Kisiki and Bofu areas of Makongeni sub-location, Langobaya division, when 76 farmers under the Food for Assets programme received two kilogrammes of hybrid maize seeds and two kilogrammes of hybrid sorghum seeds each.

The exercise was conducted by Kenya Red Cross Society Coast Regional Manager, Mr. Gerald Bombe.

He said 20 tonnes of maize and sorghum seeds will be distributed to Kwale, Kilifi and Lamu counties.

Speaking at Bofu area of Kangobaya division recently, Mr. Bombe said his organization was targeting 4,267 families for supply of sorghum, maize, cow peas, green peas seeds, among others.

The seeds are provided by the Ministry of Agriculture while the KTCS is providing logistical support.

He said farmers in Malindi and Magarini would get seeds worth Kshs.6 million.

The beneficiaries will receive eight tones of sorghum seeds, four tones of PH1 maize seeds, four tones of PH4 maize seeds, two metric tonnes of cow peas and two metric tonnes of green grams.

LBDA distributes inputs to Butula farmers

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUTULA MP Alfred Odhiambo has lauded Lake Basin Development Authority (LBDA) for donating seven tonnes of New Rice in Africa (NERICA) rice and four tonnes of Soya beans to 1,000 farmers in Butula District.

The legislator, who was addressing the farmers recently, thanked the Authority for providing the farmers with farm inputs worth Sh9 million which included certified seeds and fertilizers.

The MP urged the beneficiaries to make maximum use of the inputs to reduce high poverty levels in the region.

The District Agricultural Officer (DAO) Benjamin Onyancha called upon farmers to grow early maturing crops to address food insecurity. The DAO assured the farmers that there was ready market for their crops because the LBDA will purchase the harvests.

Mr Onyancha further said that new breed of rice had an advantage over other crops such as sugarcane, saying a kilo of the new rice seed could yield up to 100kg, earning the farmers a handsome profit.

He said the Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA) had donated four milling machines to facilitate milling of the ready crops.

Mr Onyancha said that the government had also allocated Sh1.1million to 3,140 subsistence farmers in four locations in the district to facilitate orphaned crops programme and train framers on how to undertake green house farming.

He disclosed that some of the farmers had been given a Sh120,000 grant each under the Njaa Marufuku Kenya (NMK) programme to facilitate the growing of indigenous bananas to curb over-dependence of imports from a neighbouring country.

Mr Onyancha observed that while Busia County is blessed with fertile soils and adequate rains, many residents have preferred cross-border trade at the expense of agriculture, a situation he says has contributed to the high levels of poverty in the region.

A part from assistance from the LBDA, the government of Finland will disburse Sh3billion to Busia County under a five-year programme of which Butula District

will receive Sh100million every year totaling to Sh5million at the end of the programme.

The money will be used to fund agricultural activities to promote food self-sufficiency.



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Group launches projects in Bungoma

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

AN international organization operating in Bungoma County, Vi-Agro Forestry, is carrying out a project that seeks to positively transform the lives of farmers.

The project aims to reduce poverty levels among farmers, increase food production and security.

Through the project, farmers are expected to trap carbon dioxide in the soil which is vital for crop development which would in turn give them maximum yields.

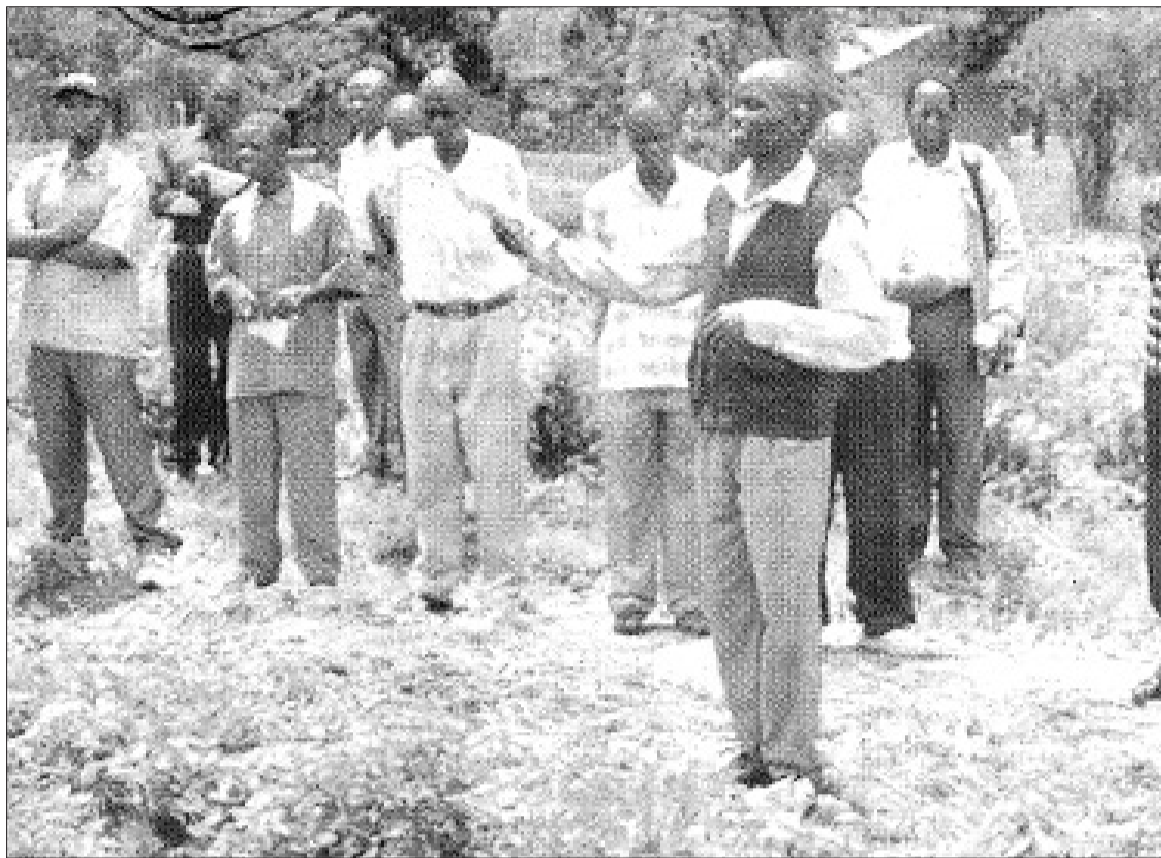
Vi-Agro forestry was launched in 1983 in West Pokot as a tree planting organization with the aim of combating desertification which is a major cause of drought.

In 1986, the organization moved the headquarters to Kitale, in Trans Nzoia District, where it was involved in encouraging farmers to practice sustainable land management practices. These included mulching, building of terraces, contours and planting cover crops.

In 2009, the Vi-Agro Forestry in collaboration with the World Bank launched a bio-carbon project in lower Bungoma under the Agricultural Carbon Finance Initiative.

In the project, they were to sign contracts with local farmers committing themselves to reduce poverty levels, increase food production.

The signing of the contract between farmers and Vi-Agro Forestry on bio-carbon credit-



A farmer in Bungoma taking the Vi-Agroforestry team round his farm.

ing was done in March 22, 2011 at Malakisi, in upper Bungoma and Bumula. The organization is working with more than 320 farmers' groups.

Each group comprises between 15-30 farmers who are said to be benefitting through payment for every 150 carbon that is produced annually.

The organization targets to recruit more than 60,000 farmers on 45 hectares of land before the end of 2014.

Before the contracts were signed, the groups were required to be registered with the Ministry of Labour, have an operational bank account, have implementation plans and policies and records. They were also required to have a constitution and proof of active participation in decision making.

The organization also required that before the contract was signed, at least 50 per cent of members must have signed

commitment letters.

In Malakisi, the Vi-Agro forestry team was led by Mr. Robert Musikoyo, who is a Deputy Manager of Vi-Agro Forestry.

The event was attended by registered groups, Malakisi DO, Mr. Benson Koskey, and other Vi-Agro Forestry officials and stakeholders.

Mr. Koskey said the farmers had embraced new farming techniques and stand to benefit.

The groups that signed the

contract included Wanambusi Group, Tumaini, Tukula, Nbula, Chepkui and Upendo Uzi self help groups.

In Malakisi, 1,174 acres of land have been put under use and more than seven groups have also been registered so far.

The deputy chief executive officer, Vi-Agro forestry, Mr. Robert Musikoyo urged the farmers to adopt the sustainable land management practices so as to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide that is emitted into the atmosphere.

He also said that farmers would gain a lot if they trapped carbon dioxide in the soil as it is vital for crop growth and development which would in turn give them maximum yields.

He also informed the farmers that only committed and hard working groups would benefit from the project after the contract signing.

In Bumula, the Vi-Agro forestry group was led by Mr. Fred Marani who is the CEO and Mr. Amos Wafula Wekesa the Vi-Agro forestry programme coordinator.

Masinde, 38, thanked the Vi-Agro forestry for the assistance and education he has received from the Vi-Agro forestry. He owns an acre of land where the homestead takes up a quarter and the rest has been put into agricultural production.

He has been able to plant more than 800 trees on his farm and he says this has helped him to increase food production on his farm.

Mwingi farmers urged to use fertilizers

By KAVYU-KURA

HUNDREDS of bags of subsidized fertilizer were by early April lying idle at the Mwingi National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) depot even as the planting season got underway after the onset of the long rains.

Fifty kilograms of DAP fertilizer is being sold to farmers at Sh2,500.

Agricultural officers were worried that the fertilizer would be withdrawn and taken to other areas if local farmers failed to take it up.

Mwingi Central District Agricultural Officer (DAO) Haroun Goro appealed to farmers to buy the fertilizer to ensure better yields.

He lamented that although the government sourced the fertilizer to be used in the famine prone regions such as Mwingi to improve food security, local

farmers had ignored the essential commodity.

Mr Goro also urged farmers to use the services of the local Agriculture Extensions Officers who would recommend the type of fertilizer they should use depending on the soil condition. The Officers would also advise on amount and quality of fertilizers suitable for their farms.

At the same time, the FARM-Africa has through its Dryland Farming initiative distributed 28 tons of millet, gadam sorghum, green grams and cowpeas to farmers in both Mwingi and Kitui.

The project co-ordinator, Jacob Mutemi told the Link the seeds benefited about 7,000 households in Ngomeni, Nuu, Mumbuni, Nzeluni, Kitui central and Nzambani divisions. The farmers were also issued with cassava cuttings and sweet potato vines.



Farmers in Nuu Division of Mwingi East display seeds donated to them by the FARM-Africa NGO just before the onset of the current March-May Rains. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Row erupts over toxic maize in Kyuso

By KAVYU-KURA

A ROW has erupted between Ministry of public Health officials and a cereals dealer in Kyuso over the officials' move to condemn 60 bags of maize in her store as containing high concentration of aflatoxin.

The merchant is disputing the results of the tests as a ploy to ruin her business. Tests were done on six samples collected from the bags of maize in her store and the government chemist said they tested positive for aflatoxin.

The trader, Ms Lenah Muli, wants fresh test carried "in her presence" so that she can confirm the results.

"I want to be there as they analyse the samples as I am not sure about the motives of these people," Ms Muli told the link at her shop at Ngomeni market, adding that she suspected a sinister motive to drive her out of her cereal business by destroying her stock.

She insisted that the condemned consignment was part of 200 bags of maize she had brought from Nativasha and was sold to consumers leaving behind the 60 bags that were later condemned by the ministry officials.

"If the rest of my consignment was consumed by the local people and no one has fallen sick why do these people want to destroy the-

maintaining 60 bags unless they want drive me out of business," she lamented.

But the Kyuso district Public officer Pauline Mumbe insists that the samples tested were from the trader's maize consignment.

She said the maize will be destroyed since allowing it to be consumed by resident was tantamount to courting disaster as it was highly lethal.

"We took the samples in the presence of the trader who also signed the seizure forms. There is nothing sinister about the whole thing... the maize is bad and must be burned to prevent it from hurting unsuspecting consumers," said Ms Mumbe when the Link caught up with her in Kyuso town.

The misunderstanding between the trader and health officials came to the fore in late March days after a mission to destroy allegedly toxic maize aborted after members of the provincial administration skipped the function in very suspicious circumstances.

Although a team of health officers led by Ms. Mumbe had arrived at the site from where the bad bags of maize were to be destroyed on March 14, they did not find the local District Officer Rebecca Wakape as they had been advised by Kyuso District Commissioner Peter Maina.

The toxic maize was discovered

in a cereals store at Ngomeni trading centre by ministry of agriculture officers who were on a routine inspection. The officers alerted the public health department who took samples to the government chemist for analysis.

"Although the Provincial administration especially the Kyuso DC had been very supportive over this matter, we had to shelve the plans to destroy the bad maize because the DO was unavailable to supervise the destruction as the law demands," said the Kyuso Medical Officer of Health Dr Boniface Kimuyu.

Dr Kimuyu told the link it was not clear why the provincial administrations had reneged on the initial arrangement to supervise the destruction of the maize.

The District public health officer in charge of disease surveillance Antony Ndung'u, who was in company of Dr Kimuyu, said the bad maize was detected in January and analysis carried at the government chemist showed that it was positive for aflatoxin.

The certificate of the Laboratory Sample Number F875-F 880/10-11 and signed by D.N Muthusi indicated that all the six samples from Kyuso reference Nos. KY/01/011/01, KY/01/011/02/, KY/01/011/03, KY/01/011/04, KY/01/011/05 and KY/01/011/06 were "Positive for Aflatoxin".



Joseph Kimwele, a Public Health Officer in Mwingi central district is assisted by prisoners to take sample of the maize suspected to be aflatoxin infested late last year. Photo/File

Kilifi residents require relief food

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE government will be required to supply about 350,000 bags of relief food to over 70,000 families hard hit by famine in the larger Kilifi District for the next five months.

A report compiled by the drought management unit covering Bahari, Ganze, Kaloleni and Rabi districts, reveals that nearly 80 percent of the total population in the area is faced with starvation due to lack of food and water.

Mr. Betwel Wafula who is coordinator of the drought management unit said the affected families will require at least 70, 000 bags of maize, beans

and other food stuffs on a monthly basis in order to sustain their families.

Mr. Wafula said the survey revealed that the affected families had totally exhausted their food reserves and will now rely on relief food support until the onset of rains in August this year.

"The food situation is alarming and the government will be forced to supply relief food to the 70,000 families adversely affected by famine until the onset of heavy rains expected in August," said Mr. Wafula.

Speaking to *The Link* in his office Mr. Wafula appealed to charitable organizations to donate food stuffs and water to enable residents survive the

ravaging drought.

The officer said livestock were as well adversely affected by the drought as they lacked water and green pasture.

He said pastoral families in parts of Ganze and Kaloleni have been forced to trek for about 13 kilometers to reach the nearest water source and also get pasture for their animals.

Mr. Wafula said the pastoralists have started selling their animals at a throw away prices to get money and buy food stuff.

He said water has become a big challenge in the area as all sources mostly the seasonal rivers, dams and pans have dried up.

He said the drought has also affected learning in the area and children have been forced to attend school half day in order to fetch water for domestic use.

The District Food for Assets Coordinator Mr. Stephen Musimba told *The Link* that the government through the ministry of livestock has released Kshs 2 million to cushion livestock farmers from the losses they have incurred during the dry period.

Civic leaders in Ganze have also appealed to the government to sent relief food in the area. Mitangani ward councillor Mr. Daniel Mangi said almost all people in his ward are affected by the drought.

KSB directors to go for elections

By JOEL JUMA

Directors of the Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) will have to face an election this year, the board's Chief Executive Officer Solomon Odera has said.

Odera said plans by some of the directors to have their term of office extended will not work, as the Sugar Act stipulates that they serve for three years.

"The Act is clear and those who want to use the State Cooperation Act to extend their term to five years will be going against policies of the sugar industry," said Odera.

Odera said pressure from cane farmers who want the directors to quit was high adding that the board was working on an election process.

He explained that the board was ready to have elections held this year.

Farmers from Mumias Sugar belt and Cabinet minister Wycliffe Oparanya petitioned Agriculture Minister Sally Kosgey to dissolve the board.

Mumias Sugarcane Growers Association Executive Director Simon Wesechere and Oparanya said it is wrong for the directors to remain in office whereas their had term expired.

Dr Kosgey is supposed to disband the board this month but the directors are lobbying to have their term extended by two years.

Directors Billy Wanjala and Mohammed Mukhwana said the State Corporation Act allows them to serve for five years. The directors differed with the board chairman Saul Busolo over the matter saying the board has leadership wrangles that need to be resolved before they face the ballot.

Wanjala and Mukhwana however said they are ready to face farmers for a fresh mandate.

Kiambere residents accuse KenGen of neglect

By MORRIS GITHENYA

A CONFLICT is simmering between a power generating company and Kiambere residents over failure by the company to support residents put up an alternative community water project as their current source has been infested by crocodiles.

The residents say many people have lost their lives after being attacked by crocodiles at the Kiambere, Gitaru and Kindaruma hydro generating dams and accused the Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) of ignoring their plight despite drawing huge profits from their resource.

Kiambere ward councillor Francis Njuki said the residents were irked by a recent move by KenGen to finance a water project in a neighbouring area at

a cost of Kshs5 million.

"We want the company to give us a similar allocation to enable us initiate an alternative water project that would put an end the threat posed by the crocodiles," said the civic leader.

The residents blocked the road leading to Kiambere hydro dam until their grievances were addressed.

Efforts by Mbeere South DC Abdi Khalif to convince the residents to open the road fell on deaf ears.

This is the second time in two months the road has been closed by residents after a crocodile mauled and killed Joyce Ruguru in January 26 this year.

KenGen vehicles heading to Kiambere Hydro dam were forced to return to Matendeni camp and no public service vehicle was operating.



Queuing for water at a kiosk along the Kiambere-Mwingi water pipeline project. Photo/File

Isiolo pastoralist resort to crop farming

By MALACHI MOTANO

NOMADIC communities in Isiolo County are shifting from pastoralism to modern agriculture in a bid to cushion themselves from the harsh economic times and fight food insecurity.

The communities in Samburu, Turkana, Rendile, Borana, Somali who have traditionally engaged in cattle-rustling wars are now changing their lifestyles and are today engaged in the growing of beans, Kales (Sukuma wiki) among other subsistence crops not only for consumption in their homes, but also for sale in Isiolo town. Thanks to Isiolo River that has provided water for irrigation

Augustine Moto is the voice of young farmers in Kitile Village who have been farming for the last one year (since February 2010) in Samburu

"My dad had 80 cows, 40 goats and 5 donkeys. But we lost more than three-quarters of this during the prolonged periods of drought. Today

we are only left with 25 animals in total, out of the 125 we had in 2009. It was from this experience, that we opted to go green in order to reverse the trend.

Although the decision sounded brilliant, implementing it remained so challenging as Kitile village is 5km from Isiolo River. The young farmers needed to practice irrigation but because of lack of proper equipment, they had to do it manually. Young women would go to fetch water from the river in large buckets for irrigation as their men prepare the land for crops.

"We decided to start growing food crops though it was not easy. The river is far away from where we live. We don't have long pipes that would bring water from the river. There is inadequate rainfall in this area and life has to continue. What else could we do? The only option we had (at the beginning) was to be literally fetching water from the river to our farms. We were a small group of about 20 ladies and gentlemen."

For the first time in June 2010 Samburu residents ate their own agricultural produce and sent some for sale in the open markets in Isiolo. The small group harvested large tones of Kales, tomatoes and spinach from ten farms approximately two acres each.

"We managed to get a plenty of harvest. I imagine for the first time my mum never bought Sukuma wiki. The produce was too much for home consumption and one of us came with a suggestion that we immediately adopted and today is like our main target. The suggestion was if we can try selling our produce. After making a good sale, we decided that we will not only be consuming the vegetables at home, but we will also take them to Isiolo Market and infact to day we are farming for business"

It is until this time when the group of twenty (without a formal name) made big harvest for both home consumption and sell in the markets that more people from different villages came in for Agriculture

Today, about 40% of vegetables consumed in Isiolo town according Adan Ali Wako the chairman of the Isiolo county council are locally produced and is wishing that famers had learnt the importance of the river much early.

"I am very happy as the chairman of this council, because my people can today produce their own food. When you visit people selling vegetables in the streets of Isiolo town, most of them will tell you that they have not made their purchase from Meru farmers. Isiolo River has been here for very long, but people had not exploited it well. Today, farms are all over the river. We even allowed them to move closer to the river (riverbanks) and do their crop production

Zubaida Ahmana is a vegetable vendor in Isiolo town. "Nowadays I only use Kshs 300 to make a purchase from our local farmers as opposed to before when I had to use at least Kshs2000 because the vegetables brought here from other counties were more expensive.

Spike in youth suicides alarms Murang'a

By MORRIS GITHENYA

CASES of suicides in Murang'a County are not new but recently alarm has been raised following an upward trend involving the youth.

In the last two months Kandara District has reported five suicidal cases including that of an administration police officer who shot himself dead.

Kigumo District has since reported two suicide incidents, while Murang'a North region has seven incidents.

A police officer recently lamented "Am touched at the rate at which we collect bodies dangling on trees or roof tops and ferry them to mortuaries at Githumu, Murang'a and Thika," said a police officer.

Kigumo OCPD Mr. Saidi Mohammed has also expressed concern over the increased incidents of suicides in the area and called on leaders to be part of the solution.

Recently a Primary School teacher Njoroge Kamande of Mugu-mo-ini primary school in Kigumo district committed suicide after a children's court ordered his salary to be shared out with his estranged wife for the up keep of his children.

In protest, he hanged himself moments after he visited his bank only to find his salary slashed by half in compliance with the court order.

A month ago, an administration police officer at Kandara district headquarters shot himself dead with a rifle assigned to guard the DC's residence.

In Murang'a North region, three people were reported having committed suicide among them a convict who was jailed by a Kangema court after he was found guilty of sodomy. The private school watchman James Gatimi (38) pleaded guilty to sodomising a pupil, before a Kangema court handed him a 20 years jail term.

Murang'a Ac ting OCPD Mr Misheck Kiptum said the convict had been booked at Kangema police station awaiting to be transported to Murang'a GK Prisons to start his sentence. "We are currently getting many reports of suicides than last year," said Kiptum when he talked with The Link.

In another shocking incident a man took on his life after he tested HIV positive in Gikindu location.

The deceased John Mungai had been forced by his father to seek medical treatment after he remained bedridden for a long period.

Accompanied by his father, Mungai went to Murang'a district hospital where after counseling agreed to take a HIV test before testing positive only to hang himself when they returned home.

In Gikoe village in Mathioya, Stanley Mundia hanged himself on grounds he was the only survivor among his age mates in Nairobi.

Nyanza leads in TB cases

By BOB OMBATI

NYANZA province still leads in cases of Tuberculosis (TB) in the country and accounts for up to 20 per cent of the national prevalent rate.

Records at the health department in Nyanza, blames the high incidence rate to the corresponding HIV infections which have remained relatively high.

The Provincial Director of Health, Francis Nzioka says that although TB cases have been declining lately, the prevalence rate was still high compared to the situation at the national level.

In a speech read on his behalf by Dr Peter Okoth who is in charge of the TB division in the Province, the director said between 2000 and 2007, TB cases rose from 13,095 to 23,000. They have reduced to about 20,000 at the moment but that was still high compared to about 100,000 cases nationally.

"This translates to a fifth of the total national cases and shows that the scourge is very high in this region than any other part of the country," said Dr Okoth. Dr. Okoth said that Homa-bay county had registered the highest number of new infections with about 27 people suffering from Multi Drug Resistant TB and undergoing treatment. He said the government has increased vigilance and surveillance by involving community members to monitor and report cases of TB for early intervention in order to curb further spread.

HIV/AIDS has also been identified as the major contributor to the high cases of TB, with the province registering a prevalence rate of 14.2 percent which is twice the national prevalence rate which currently stand at 7percent.

Statics further indicate that up to 67percent of TB patients in Nyanza are HIV/AIDS patients, with the rate varying from 31percent in Kisii South District to a high rate of 81percent in Suba District.

Dr Kadondi Kasera who is in charge of TB division in the southern part of the province says that besides improving infrastructure, the government has divided the province into two regions to ease the fight against the disease.

"We now have Nyanza North and Nyanza South Control Centres to ease



TB infections is still rampant in Nyanza.

the burden, as we revamp our hospitals," said Dr Kasera at Marani Primary school. The area District officer, James Gitau Muriuki urged the public to visit hospitals for regular checkups instead

of blaming witchcraft on such ailments.

Gitau said that many people in rural areas blame witchcraft for every ailment and therefore were unable to seek medication on time to curb spread.

The DO noted that huge consignment of TB drugs were expiring in government health facilities since people shied away from such centres in fear of stigmatization.

Investigate US ambassador — Nyeri youth

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

A GROUP of youths from Nyeri County have called on the government to investigate US ambassador Michael Rannerberger and the embassy over some youth projects being sponsored in the country.

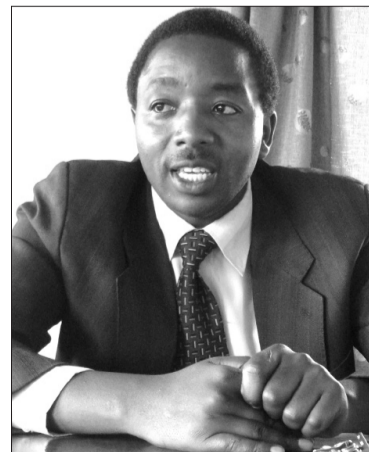
Speaking in the wake of reports that the US is spending Kshs3.6 billion on youth projects whose objective is to kick out existing leaders and replace them with a new lot, the youths said the projects should be probed.

"The Government should investigate the ambassador and the embassy because if the money is used for the wrong cause it could cause instability. The intention of

the funding could be suspect," said the chairman of the Nyeri Youth Group Samson Kagiri.

Mr Kagiri claimed that the US ambassador is using the youths to propagate his own ideologies and not further Kenya's interests.

"Our problems will not be solved by US or any other country. Kenya will not be a puppet of any country and Kenyans should be proud of who we are as a nation. Young people should know that Rannerberger is a friend by day and an enemy by night," said Mr Kagiri. He urged young people not to allow themselves to be used by diplomats or politicians who are out to secure their selfish interests.



Nyeri Youth Group chairman Mr Samson Kagiri speaking to the press in Nyeri town recently.

Troubled Tanathi owes workers millions

By KAVYU-KURA

THE troubled Tanathi Water Services Board (TWSB) has not remitted salary statutory deductions amounting to more than Kshs4.1 million belonging to some of its workers.

An audit carried last December on the operations of the Kiambere-Mwingi Water and Sanitation Company (KMWSO) revealed that 16 of the TWSB employees who were seconded to KMWSO have not had their check-off statutory deductions remitted to respective institutions.

Section 6 of the damning audit report titled "Personnel Expenses" and in sub section 6.1 headed "Staff Matters", indicate that the money in question is for employees inherited by TWSB from Tana and Athi River Development Authority (TARDA) in 2006 and were consequently seconded to Mwingi based KMWSO.

The report indicated that the affected employees do not receive their full salaries as the payroll is prepared at the TWSB based in Kitui and the net of the salaries is paid by the company leaving the statutory deductions unremitted. As at (last) 30th June the unremitted statutory deductions amounted to Kshs4,159,062.

The unremitted money includes part contributions to Kenya Revenue Authority as Pay As You Earn, National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF), National Social Security Fund (NSSF), Bank Cooperatives Society and Company loans and salary advance repayment.

We have established that the failure to release the employees' money has led to the employees being blacklisted by loaning institutions and can no longer access loan facilities from banks and other lenders.

"We are no longer regarded as creditworthy by banks and other loan-



A Water kiosk where some of the affected employees are deployed. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

ing institution. I was shocked when I went to Equity Bank to seek a loan for my children education only to be told I had been blacklisted and cannot get a loan from any bank not only in Kenya but in Africa," said a distraught water kiosk attendant.

A couple of months ago, a kiosk attendant who was unable to obtain a loan from a bank to pay her children's school fees shocked Mwingi town residents when she attempted suicide citing unbearable frustrations.

The woman, who was discovered

in her house by her colleagues' unconscious and frothing in the mouth, survived after she was rushed to the Mwingi District hospital where she received treatment.

The affected employees displayed to us various Tanathi pay advice slips that showed deductions towards PAYE, NHIF, NSSF, NWC pension scheme, salary advance and bank loans.

The Chairman of the KMWSO where the affected employees had been seconded, Josephat Mulyungi,

confirmed that TWSB has not been remitting the workers statutory reductions "and we have asked them to pay the arrears or take back their suffering employees.

"It would appear there was a transition problem when TWSB took over the employees from TARDA as they were previously paid by Treasury but they did not come with their pay roll. The deduction indicated in the TWSB is just smart paper work as the money is never remitted to the relevant organization," said Mulyungi.

Research shows decline in fertility rate

By PETER MUTUKU

THE total fertility rate in Kenya has declined over the past two decades, Mr. Peter A. Nyakwara, who is a senior programme officer with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics National Coordinating Agency for Population and Development, has said.

He said that currently, women in Kenya have an average of 4.6 children, a slight decrease from 4.9 in 2003.

He said that the fertility in the country varies by residence and province. "Women in urban areas have 2.9 children on average, compared with 5.2 children per woman in rural areas," he adds.

"Fertility is highest in the Kenya's Western Province where women have an average of 5.6 children and lowest in Nairobi Province where women have an average of 2.8 children," Nyakwara said.

He spoke at the Kitui Parkside Villa Hotel during a two-day seminar on the 2008-2009 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey organised by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. According to Nyakwara, fertility also varies with literacy levels and economic status.

He said that the women who have secondary and higher education have an average of 3.1 children, while women with no education have more than twice as many children.

He said that fertility increases when respondents are poor. Nyakwara said that the poorest Kenyan women in general have more than twice as many children as women who live in the wealthiest households where he said the comparison is 7.0 versus 2.9 children per woman.

The KNBS official said that the maternal mortality ratio for Kenya is 488 per 100,000 live births. He said

that post-natal care helps prevent complications after childbirth. He said that 43 per cent of Kenya's births occur in health facilities with 32 per cent being registered in the public hospitals and 10 per cent in private sector facilities. "Fifty-six per cent of births occur at home. Home births are more common in rural areas," the official told the seminar.

On teenage fertility in the country, Nyakwara said that according to the 2008-2009 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, some 18 per cent of young women aged 15-19 years have begun childbearing. He said that 15 per cent are mothers and that an additional three per cent are pregnant with their first child.

Kiharu MP speaks on laxity in the distribution of seeds

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE government has been accused of laxity in the distribution of relief seeds to farmers to enable them plant during the rainy season.

Kiharu Member of Parliament Mr. Muturi Mwangi said the government should come up with a time frame instead of distributing seedlings to farmers during rainy seasons.

Muturi spoke at Kabirwa market in his constituency when he saw farmers in the area lining up to receive assorted seedlings from department of agriculture.

"It is high time the government

came up with a programme on how well the seedlings can be distributed to farmers instead of the current scenario where government officials rush to supply the seedlings when it is raining," said the MP.

The lawmaker also urged his constituents to plant drought resistant crops to help improve on food security.

"We need to diversify our production and stop relying on traditional food crops such as maize and beans which hardly survive drought," said the MP.

And, the limited flow of information within the East African Community remains a major im-

pediment to the integration process.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of East African Community Mr. David Nalo says that many of the citizens in the region do not understand the stages of integration and their possible role in trading among the member states.

Speaking during a leaders meeting in Murang'a County, the PS said there was need to create public awareness on the stages of integration and inform people on their subsequent roles.

The government, he said, has embarked on a rigorous exercise to educate the public on what the EAC community means to them

and the country as a whole.

"Currently the public awareness meetings have been spread out in 24 counties in an exercise launched a month ago," said Nalo.

The PS said border towns of Namanga and Busia will be established to coordinate issues surrounding integration, benefits, challenges and opportunities in the EAC.

"People from Murang'a County are set to benefit from EAC integration process because of increased trade, infrastructure development, employment and investment opportunities stemming from the anticipated bigger economy," said the PS.

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

LITIGANTS are being advised to ensure that contracts between them and their advocates are clear and realistic.

The advice was made recently at Bungoma county hall by the Advocates Complaints Commission chair, Mr. Joseph King'arui during a public sensitization forum on advocate-client relationship.

Mr. King'arui says that failure to advise clients on cost before commencement of the work he/she is contracted to do, gives advocates lee-way to overcharge clients with impunity. "On taking instructions, the advocate should give clients the best information possible on the likely costs of the mat-

ter. If no fees have been agreed or estimate given, the advocate should tell the clients how the fees will be calculated," the chair-says. He further observes that failure to keep the client informed regarding the costs incurred as the matter proceeds could prejudice an advocate's ability to recover a fair and reasonable fee for the work done.

Mr. King'arui cautions advocates that it is a professional misconduct to give an unrealistically low level of fees solely to attract work and subsequently charge a high fee. "This is improper because it misleads the client as to the true or likely

cost of the matter", the chair adds.

The commission chair at the same time also urged litigants with complaints against advocates to provide the commission with comprehensive documents and information to support their case.

"Copies of all relevant correspondence as far as possible including letters, receipts, particulars of parties involved should be enclosed", he says.

Mr. King'arui adds that upon receipt of the complaints the commission will analyze and handle them within seven days.

However, directors of human rights

lobby groups appealed to the commission chair to consider decentralizing its offices in order to serve more people from the rural set up.

Messrs. Job Bwonya of Western Kenya human rights watch, Martin Wanyonyi of West Kenya legal AID centre, Taiga Wanyanja of Torture Survivors Organization and Nehemiah Mukubwa of Torture Victims rehabilitation center say whereas the commission is doing a good job, its impact is hardly felt by a majority of the people.

The four urged the commission to open offices in every county in order to

relieve people with complaints against advocates of the burden of traveling to Nairobi to seek redress.

They also appealed to the commission to ensure that the list of advocates' fees for all the nature of cases is widely publicized so that unscrupulous advocates do not fleece litigants their hard earned money.

The advocates complaint commission is a statutory body established under section 53 of the Advocates act to inquire into any complaints against practicing advocates, firm of advocates or any member or employee there of.

Public tipped on contracts

Songa decries poor crop yields

By KAVYU-KURA

THE government has taken early intervention measures to cushion people of Eastern Province from effects of adverse weather conditions.

Agriculture Secretary Wilson Songa said besides distributing planting seeds to farmers, loaning facilities to farmers had been arranged through Equity Bank, the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) and Njaa Marufuku Project.

Dr Songa said such measures would ensure farmers utilized available rains to attain maximum yields to make them food secure.

The Agriculture Secretary said although the expected maize yields last year was 7.5 million bags, only 3.8 million bags were realized while the bean yield was 1 million bags against a target of 2 million. The low yields were attributed to the dry conditions brought about by La Nina.

He pointed out that although it had been predicted that the current March-May long rains would be largely insufficient, tons fertilizers and assorted seeds had been issued to farmers to boost yields.

Dr. Songa was speaking in Mwingi Central District where he was the Chief Guest during an Agricultural field day at Muumbuni trading centre in late March.

He noted that farmers in Mwingi earned Sh10.2 million last year from the sale of Sorghum to the World Food Programme (WFP) and the East African breweries. Farmers had put some 6,500 hectares under Sor-



Dr. Songa (in black suit and holding microphone) speaks to farmers at the Mumbuni Agricultural field day last Thursday. The Mwingi Central District Agricultural officer Haroun Goro stands next to him. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

ghum and realized 7,300 metric tons.

Dr. Songa encouraged farmers to take advantage of the ready market to put more hectares under the crop.

In the face of perennial drought,

he said, farmers should adopt dry land farming techniques by growing drought tolerant crops to increase crop production and ensure food security.

He stressed the importance of Agricultural field days saying they helped farmers learn emerging farming technologies.

Meanwhile, two weeks into the

March-May long rains, most poor farmers in Kyuso district had not planted as the government was yet to deliver the promised free drought recovery seeds worth Sh5.8 million.

A survey carried by the Link in Kyuso established that only well-to-do residents had been able to plant after sourcing seeds from cereal dealers at high prices.

Sources say the government had promised to deliver 40 tons of assorted seeds including millet, sorghum, cowpeas and green grams before the rains started but no deliveries had been made by the end of March.

Contacted, the Kyuso District Agricultural Officer (DAO) Titus Masila was cagey with details over the delay only saying the seeds would be delivered any time and be immediately distributed to farmers.

Earlier, Eastern Provincial Commissioner Claire Omollo had announced that farmers in the six districts in Mwingi would receive 200 metric tons of assorted seeds worth over Sh28 million ahead of the long rains.

Speaking at Kivou village during a tour of Mwingi Central district in March where she launched the seed distribution exercise, the PC added that the seed consignments were aimed at moderating food security in the drought and famine prone districts.

Ms Omollo reiterated the Government's commitment to feed its citizens by developing watertight strategies to enhance food security.

She observed that the Mwingi area was ideal for drought escaping traditional crops like cassava, millet, sorghum, green grams and cowpeas which if embraced will solve food insecurity in the area.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

Central goat farmers earned millions

DAIRY goat farmers from Mt Kenya region earned Kshs20.8 million last year from the sale of 1,679 goats through the Dairy Goat Association of Kenya (DGAK), a drop from the Kshs23.3 million realised in 2009 from the sale of 1,944 goats.

Speaking during the 17th Annual General Meeting at Nyamachaki PCEA Hall in Nyeri town, the association chairman Julius Kang'ee said the main buyers were Catholic diocese of Embu and Nakuru, World Vision Maragwa and Kisii, Community Based Organisations based in Mumias, Emuhaya and Vihiga. Others were Arid Land Resource Management Project of Nyeri. The farmers also earned some Kshs1.9 million from the sale 48,182 litres of milk, compared to Kshs1.2 million last year from the sale of 31, 835 litres. A litre of milk was sold for an average of Kshs40.

DGAK has a membership of about 16,000 farmers from 1, 290 member groups. It has branches in Nyeri, Murang'a, Kiambu, Embu, Nakuru, Kirinyaga and Mbale District in Western Kenya.

"About 337 bucks were rotated last year and 120 bucks were replaced within a year due to death or lack of

libido. The association was able to replace all the bucks that were reported," The chairman told over 500 farmers who attended the AGM.

The association financial reserves have grown from Kshs3.5 million by December 31, 2007 to Kshs8.9 million by December 31, 2010.

However, the farmers have been faced with many challenges including difficulties in delivering milk from the farms to the collection centres as some farmers have to walk for long distances and poor feeding methods which compromise milk production.

"Due to lack of skills on quality fodder production and conservation, our farmers need to be trained on quality fodder production and conservation. This will improve the quality of the goats and have a uniform production of milk throughout the year," Kang'ee said.

Ministry of Livestock officials lauded the work the association has been doing to eradicate poverty saying it was in line with the Government's Vision 2030 economic blueprint.

The association is now planning to open more branch offices besides



Goat farmers from Nyeri County pass past President Mwai Kibaki with their goats during last year's ASK show at Kabiru-ini grounds. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

training more assistants to cope with the increased number of farmer groups and also elect branch officials as per the revised election guidelines.

The association is also planning to import semen and, if possible life goats, in order to increase the genetic variability of the breeding stock.

The organization receives support from NGOs such as MOLD, DED, GTZ/PSDA and Arid Land Dry Area Project.

“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.”

Public responses to

The task force on devolution has just released an interim report with a raft of proposals that will guide the implementation of devolution structures in line with the Constitution. The following are excerpts of the report outlining public responses and recommendations by the Task Force on key thematic areas compiled by FAITH MUIRURI.

Thematic Questions for public response from the devolution Task Force	Public Response	Task Force Recommendations
<p>Cooperative Government, Inter-Governmental Relations and Levels of Governance</p> <p>(i) How should the County government cooperate with National Government Ministries, Parliament, Judiciary and the Commission for Revenue Allocation and other Constitutional Commissions</p> <p>(ii) What other decentralized units will be necessary in County Governments and Why</p> <p>(iii) What actions are needed to facilitate linkages and consultations between a County Government and its senator</p> <p>(iv) What considerations should be taken into account in establishing cities and urban areas in counties</p> <p>How should conflicts between county governments be addressed</p> <p>Financial Resources and Management of County governments</p> <p>(i) What should be the basis for any allocation of funds and grants to county governments</p> <p>(ii) How should the current devolved funds (such as CDF, LATF, Road Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF), Youth Enterprise Fund, Women Enterprise Fund, Bursary Funds, etc) be managed in the context of County Governments</p> <p>(iii) What controls and safeguards should be put in place to prevent misuse and inappropriate application of funds at the county level?</p> <p>(iv) What should be the criteria and requirements for the approval of loans and loan guarantees to county governments?</p>	<p>● Design a policy and legal framework to guide cooperation and consultation between National and county governments.</p> <p>● Establish a Ministry of Cooperative government at the national level to manage its affairs</p> <p>● The County Executive cabinet should reflect that of the National cabinet in number, function and service</p> <p>● There should be matching of the National Parliament with County Assemblies on the issues of standing orders, business calendar and committees but legislation of the National Parliament should not affect parliament the County Assembly.</p> <p>● An administrative system which serves public interest, in particular service delivery with minimal politics</p> <p>● Senators to have offices at County level and attend County executive committee meetings as ex-officio members and address the County Assembly on designated days</p> <p>● Senators and Members of the National Assembly to attend seminars, workshops and meetings between counties and their elected officials</p> <p>● The Senators to participate in regular question and answer sessions with the County.</p> <p>● The County Government to invite the Senator for quarterly meetings.</p> <p>● The Senator to organize quarterly/biannual review meetings with the Speaker of the County Assembly to give advice on County legislation as required.</p> <p>● Sound tax base, and ability to attract external funding,</p> <p>● Population of at least 350,000 inhabitants in a built area,</p> <p>● Development level, including level of economic growth and industrialization, per capita income, vibrant number of businesses,</p> <p>● Long term planning, in line with national development plan,</p> <p>● Investment climate, including level of infrastructure development, quality of transport, water and sanitation, health, safety and security and quality of schools,</p> <p>● Administrative facilities with employees conversant and applying ICT in communication and development, and</p> <p>● Topographical features</p> <p>● Establish an inter-county committee to deal with disputes arising</p> <p>● Create a national arbitration organ</p> <p>● Establish a specialized ministry at the national level to deal with conflict resolution.</p> <p>● Empower the Village Council of Elders</p> <p>● Devolve judicial functions to the lower level</p> <p>● Establish special courts to resolve conflicts and establish peace-conflict committees</p> <p>● National interest</p> <p>● Population density of a county</p> <p>● Vastness of the County</p> <p>● Poverty index</p> <p>● Fiscal capacity of the county to manage the funds</p> <p>● Presence of a county development plans</p> <p>● Marginalization and the contribution to national government in terms tax generation</p> <p>● Establish a central office within the county to coordinate use of funds</p> <p>● Politicians to play an oversight role</p> <p>● Youth and Women funds be brought to the county level to enhance accessibility since most people at the county level have no information regarding the funds</p> <p>● The offices of KACC (Ethics and Anti-Corruption commission) be devolved to the counties to avoid corruption, mismanagement of funds and abuse of office for ease of reporting, quick investigation and action</p> <p>● For transparency and accountability in the use of the funds, it should be more participatory</p> <p>● Internal audits should be undertaken on quarterly basis and made public as a basis for community monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>● Establishment of an independent county revenue authority as supervisory body for management of public funds. The authority to be composed of community stakeholders elected but not handpicked by the governor.</p> <p>● A project must be economically viable, sustainable, and capacity to repay</p> <p>● The public should participate in identifying projects to be funded by such funds</p> <p>● National government must set terms and conditions on loans and grants</p> <p>● Consultations between the county and national government before seeking for grants and loans</p> <p>● County's capability in financial management, implementation of previously loaned projects, and level of funding requirements should be considered</p>	<p>● An intergovernmental relations legislation where concrete decision making mandates are assigned to the designated intergovernmental institutions;</p> <p>● An intergovernmental/cooperative National Government Ministry and corresponding County departments to coordinate matters of intergovernmental cooperation;</p> <p>● The County Executive ministries be coordinates to the national ministries and the corresponding county executives be established in order to facilitate the execution of national government functions (police services, health, education, immigration and citizenship);</p> <p>● The Committees of the County Assembly coordinate to the National Assembly Committees where practical.</p> <p>● Decentralisation in rural areas to be designed in three levels (units) below the County namely: level 1, 2, and 3. The first level is tentatively referred to as sub county and is expected to embrace constituencies/districts, while the second and third levels will embrace wards/locations and villages/sub-locations respectively</p> <p>● The urban municipalities can be categorized into three, those with at least 300,000 (large) and above; between 50,000 and 299,999 (medium) and those with between 30,000 and 49,999 (small). The first two categories will provide similar services depending on their capacity, while the last category can provide minimal services as delegated by the County government</p> <p>● County Assembly to provide full and regular reports to the Senate on a bi-annual basis and the Senate in turn provide the County Assembly with feedback on a bi-annual basis</p> <p>● An intra-County forum comprising of the Senator, Governor and Members of the National and County Assemblies be established to hold consultative meetings on a bi-annual basis</p> <p>● Come up with a mechanism/body for designation of cities and urban areas</p> <p>● Counties enter into horizontal agreements that address trans-border issues and clarify signatories</p> <p>● Counties submit draft legislation to the Kenya Law Reform Commission to ensure that conflict of laws on account of concurrency of functions is detected early and appropriate measures taken to avert the potential conflict</p> <p>● Grant incentives to Counties to undertake joint projects</p> <p>● Enact legislation to guide the conclusion of inter-county agreements</p> <p>● "Devolve" some functions of the Judiciary to the sub county units by recognising appropriate existing traditional/local mechanisms and institutions for dispute resolution subject to the Constitution.</p> <p>● National interest</p> <p>● Need to ensure that county governments are able to perform the functions allocated to them</p> <p>● The fiscal capacity and efficiency of county governments</p> <p>● Special allocations and provisions for marginalized groups and areas</p> <p>● Promotion of equitable development in county governments</p> <p>● CDF, LATF, RMLF to finance functions assigned to counties</p> <p>● Constituency Bursary Fund, Free Primary Education Fund, Water Services Trust Fund and HIV/AIDS Community Initiative Account be channeled directly to county governments</p> <p>● The other funds are loan facilities available to individuals or groups to promote development of rural areas managed by entities of the national government</p> <p>● The management of rural electrification function be devolved to county governments</p> <p>● No compelling reason to change the current system of managing these funds, except as proposed by the stakeholders</p> <p>● The offices of the responsible entities be decentralised to the counties for efficient delivery of services</p> <p>● Establishment of an internal audit mechanism to consistently provide an oversight to the usage of public funds</p> <p>Internal and external borrowing</p> <p>● Written proof that the intended borrowing has been approved by the County Assembly</p> <p>● Written proof that the intended borrowing has been included in the budgets of the county</p> <p>● Proof of public participation in contributing to the budget and loan proposals of the county</p> <p>● Ability of the subject capital project to generate the necessary cash flows to repay the loan</p> <p>External borrowing from international financial institution, the county must be clear on the following</p> <p>● role of National Government departments in facilitating county governments</p> <p>● conditions for loan repayment</p> <p>● loan disbursement procedures</p> <p>● responsibility for the assumption of interest and foreign exchange risks</p> <p>Loan Guarantees</p> <p>● Loan guarantee applications must be acknowledged in writing within a week.</p> <p>● The roles of national departments and officials responsible for loan guarantees must be clearly set out in regulations</p>
<p>Political Governance, Leadership, Accountability and Integrity in County Governments</p> <p>(i) What should be the qualifications, leadership qualities, and experience of the governor, senator, county assembly members and county executive members</p> <p>(ii) What kind of electoral processes will enhance political competition and choice at County level</p>	<p>Governor:</p> <p>● Degree in public administration, economics, humanities, social sciences, community development</p> <p>● 10 years' experience</p> <p>● Headed a government department with exemplary performance in that department</p> <p>Senator:</p> <p>● Should not have been a politician / Politician with Five years of experience</p> <p>● Law Degree holders</p> <p>● Should not have worked in the present government</p> <p>County Assembly Members:</p> <p>● Resident, political knowledge and experience</p> <p>● Serving Councillors</p> <p>● 7 per cent of County Assembly seats should be set aside for those with disabilities</p> <p>● Proportional representation for marginalized groups</p> <p>● County Government elections should be different from the national government to avoid distortions or fraud brought in by political experts</p> <p>● No direct party nominations</p> <p>● Nomination of Speaker by PSC</p> <p>● Limit on budget for campaign</p> <p>● After nomination the list to be debated at County level</p>	<p>● Must be holder of at least a first degree from a recognised university</p> <p>● Fluent in Kiswahili and English</p> <p>● Meet the requirements of leadership and integrity of the Constitution</p> <p>● Have knowledge and experience and have a distinguished career of not less than five years in fields not limited to public administration, finance, management, law, economics, human rights, social development or governance.</p> <p>● In addition the Governor and Deputy Governor should not be from the same gender, and no more than two-thirds of the Executive Committee should be from one gender</p> <p>● Vote for a closed party list to discourage corruption from the party members as compared to the open where individuals use money in influencing voters</p> <p>● Nomination or appointment of persons with expertise so as to enrich County Assembly debates</p> <p>● Members of the County Assembly possess the right aptitude to undertake their duties the Assemblies</p> <p>● Parties to come up with attractive lists, consisting of very competitive members in order to win the confidence of voters</p>

o devolution report

Political Governance, Leadership, Accountability and Integrity in County Governments	Public Response	Task Force Recommendations
<p>(iii) What should be the procedures for developing party lists for proportional representation</p> <p>(iv) How should the performance of the governor, deputy governor, senator, assembly speaker, assembly members, and executive committee be assessed and enforced</p> <p>(v) What transition procedures and institutions, if any, should there be to ensure continuity of county government</p>	<p>I Governor to get 50% plus 1 votes I Majority of votes in at least half of the electoral wards</p> <p>I Lists be developed by party grass roots leaders, with strict vetting of all interested candidates with special consideration of vulnerable groups, without interference from party headquarters and then presented to the party for confirmation I Make the lists public and if possible publicized. I Party branches give the names to the electoral commission I Each party to present their lists through the National Delegates Conference. I Guided by the party constitution, consider all the ethnic groups, interest groups, geographical locations and special communities I A committee consisting of members of the public should vet the candidates I IIEC should conduct elections of all political parties to ensure fair representation and curb malpractices during party elections</p> <p>I The national government to have powers to suspend non-functioning Counties I Establish Commission to run the County government for the duration of suspension I Intervene in case of misuse of resources, inability to perform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Legislation to provide the number of members of marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities and the youth who should be represented in the County Assembly. ● Adopt a closed party list to include the interests of the voters and ensure that no changes are made after elections ● Need for a formal oversight mechanism in the legal framework to enable the public to hold the County bureaucracy accountable for their performances. ● Need for a legitimate process for removing corrupt and incompetent Executive Committee officials (public referenda, formal financial reviews) ● Governor be given veto powers over legislation passed by the County Assembly to check against unreasonable and unlawful County Assembly operations ● Procedures to provide for additional circumstances when Executive Committee members should leave office ● County governments to establish their public services ● Ministry of State for Public Service (MoSFS) to initiate a process to address the anticipated restructuring of public service to reflect the needs of the national government ● Government to set up a body to oversee the transition process and audit assets and liabilities of local authorities to ensure appropriate registers are opened for all identified assets ● ODPM/MoL.G, Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) and the Transition Authority be involved in the initial county budgets. ● Data bases for counties be developed to assist county governments to effectively undertake development planning as soon as they are established
<p>Public Participation and Oversight and Protection of Minorities and Marginalized Groups</p> <p>(i) What criteria should be used to determine minorities and marginalized communities in counties</p> <p>(ii) How can minorities and marginalized groups in counties be protected</p> <p>(iii) What procedures should be put in place to ensure public participation and influence in county governments' affairs</p> <p>Functions of and Service Delivery by County Governments</p> <p>(i) What do you think should be the role of the Provincial Administration in the counties?</p> <p>(ii) How would you like the provincial administration to be restructured to play its roles?</p> <p>(iii) How should organizations providing cross-border services (for example water services boards) be managed?</p> <p>(iv) How do you want national government functions exercised and services provided at county level?</p>	<p>● Per capita income and physical environment ● Minorities be determined by population size, level of drought and poverty. ● Single mothers and religious groups be considered as marginalised groups ● Development level, ASALs areas, socio-economic status, census, history of leadership, literacy level, elderliness ● Marginalised if they have no leaders in parastatals from their county ● They can be identified through the indigenous people framework ● Census approach use social and economic indicators for identifying marginalized groups or use census figures to identify marginalized groups ● Use the previous census to identify them or conduct another census specifically for these groups and use of tribal census to determine minorities</p> <p>● Awareness creation through civic education. Sensitisation of the marginalised communities to understand that they have equal rights and setting up information Centre's. ● Public participation & communication including participation in development plans and inviting the public to make submissions through open Barazas and town hall meetings. ● Regular free and fair elections ● Representation e.g. Executive members must be from all areas of county, women and youth be included. ● Executive positions be advertised and running mate of governor be of opposite gender. ● Education should not be a basis for leadership position</p> <p>● Develop a Legislation e.g. Participatory Act ● Establish Sub County Citizens Forum (SCCF) to scrutinize county project planning, budgeting and implementation ● Forums, neighbourhood associations and Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) ● Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS) ● Ward Citizen Forums (WCF) to enable citizen engagement with the right to access all official records for sectoral and county departments. ● Establish information Centres to access all county information ● County magazines/monthly newsletters/Information bulletins ● Establish Commission that will ensure development ● Create Ombudsman and Public complaints standing Committee ● Service delivery should be community driven through committees e.g. County Education Committee ● Organize public Barazas ● Establish a TV station and FM radio stations ● Broadcast the County Assembly proceedings to the members of the public</p> <p>● Provincial Administration be restructured and named the national administration. ● Provide for distinct administrative structures to serve the national government and the county governments. ● The national government administrative structure to play an oversight role in the implementation of national policies and legislation. ● The county administration be structured along the structure of the county executive.</p> <p>● Design of a policy and legal framework to guide cooperation and consultation between county governments ● A regional consultative organ be established to co-ordinate Counties in issues of mutual interest ● Have inter-county committees meeting quarterly to discuss issues of mutual interest ● Establish a governor's forum every six months to deliberate on the issues in their Counties to enhance cooperation and inter-relations ● Form a County steering group comprising County Executives, County Senators, among others to coordinate operations within Counties</p> <p>● National Government to focus on policy formulation and training of County civil service, while County Government concentrates on implementation of projects and services ● A National Advisory Committee to help in the operations of the Counties ● Formation of joint county board/committees to coordinate functions, services</p>	<p>● Devolution legislation to create timelines within which County government are to report on the number of appointments made to ensure that minorities, marginalized groups and communities are adequately involved</p> <p>● Structures and decision-making processes of counties be transparent and accessible to encourage the participation of marginalized groups and communities.</p> <p>● Changing attitudes and perception of members of the public regarding marginalized groups through the naming of streets and towns using minority languages</p> <p>● Counties investing in culture and cultural activities with special consideration for the minorities</p> <p>● There must be a deliberate effort to allow the minority and the marginalized to access employment opportunities in the County.</p> <p>● Protection of intellectual property of minority and marginalized communities, including sciences, technologies, medicines, and knowledge of flora and fauna as well as arts and performances.</p> <p>● Citizen engagement sites, modalities and processes like Social Budgeting framework, Community libraries, Capacity building need to be aligned with functional and sectoral lines</p> <p>● Adequate representation in the County Assembly and the Executive.</p> <p>● Participation should include involvement in public service</p> <p>● In order to enhance accountability, effective enforcement mechanisms must accompany the policy frameworks, statutory provisions and by-laws that will be required to anchor them within the binding rules</p> <p>● Directly implement functions allocated to the national Executive, to respect, uphold and safeguard the Constitution among other things</p> <p>● Provide a vital link between the national government and County governments by disseminating information and building capacity for policy and programme implementation. government by the constitution</p> <p>● Exercise oversight on the County government as it implements national policies and legislation</p> <p>● Facilitate the Presidency, as the head of the National Executive, to respect, uphold and safeguard the Constitution among other things</p> <p>● Provide a vital link between the national government and County governments by disseminating information and building capacity for policy and programme implementation.</p> <p>● A taskforce is established to restructure the system</p> <p>● An evaluation exercise is undertaken to establish the optimal staff establishment after the proposed restructuring.</p> <p>● All the relevant legislation which impact on Provincial Administration are reviewed and harmonized.</p> <p>● The Security Bills currently under preparation to incorporate the roles of the proposed restructured Provincial Administration and County governments</p> <p>● Enact an intergovernmental relations legislation to support inter county co-operation</p> <p>● Incorporation of legislation by reference be underpinned in the intergovernmental relations legislation to enable Counties that are subject to the asymmetrical devolution of the legislative function or those that are yet to legislate a particular law to adopt the legislation of another county on a related field</p> <p>● Establish a Council of Counties comprising the 47 Governors with the chair on rotational basis, to be held twice annually.</p> <p>● Additional fora to address issues of trans-county concerns be constituted on a needs basis</p> <p>● A policy direction that National Government should endeavor to focus on policy formulation and enhancing the capacity of the County Governments, while the latter concentrate on implementation of projects and efficient delivery of services</p> <p>● National Government provides transitional model legislation pending the enactment by the County Assemblies of their own context specific legislation</p>