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The trouble with state sugar firms



A tractor prepares to deliver cane from an outgrower farm within Chemelil Zone to Chemelil Sugar factory. Photo/Bosco Magare

Decades of political interference has forced state sugar farms on their knee

By BOSCO MAGARE

THE performance of the local sugar industry has over the last 40 years been hampered by political interference.

Investigations by *The Link* has established that a combination of debilitating factors and traditional challenges have held back the local public owned sugar companies from realizing their full potential.

As a result the industry incurs a whopping 14 billion shillings in losses annually due to underutilization of installed capacities.

Industry stakeholders including Chief Executives Officers (CEOs), Chairmen of Board of Directors of state sugar factories, farmers and the civil society we interviewed gave the same verdict regarding the performance and challenges of the local industry, particularly the public owned firms.

In an exclusive interview with *The Link*, Chemelil Sugar Company Managing Director (MD) Eng. Edward Musebe, singles out high cost of production, drop in cane yields and

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Uhuru draws CDF curtain

By FAITH MUIRURI

AS the country prepares for the much-awaited devolution under the new constitution, the Treasury has set in motion plans to wind up the Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

The clearest indication of the impending fall of the CDF came when Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta informed parliament during the budget reading that he had allocated additional 3.7 billion shillings to oversee completion of projects started under the fund.

However, a number of concerns have been raised, with those opposed to the dissolution of the fund urging for caution when considering this option until a number of issues are addressed. Dr Obuya Bagaka of the Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) argues that CDF is a political system that was created to restore

the problem of political and resource marginalization and therefore it is too soon to expect the County Governments to fill in the political void.

"The argument for or against CDF must start with an analysis of whether the political and social environment that created it has changed or not. In my view, it has not hence CDF must not be wished away too soon," he affirms during a public debate on what next for CDF jointly organized by The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA), Center for Enhancing Democracy and Good Governance (CEDGG) and the Open Society Initiative.

Dr Bagaka says that the fund should instead be retained as a conditional grant to support some specific function(s) that the central government opts to delegate to the county governments.

He says that when viewed as a categorical fund, CDF will not only make more funds avail-

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Mr. Uhuru

The trouble with state sugar firms

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poorly remunerated skilled employees as some of the challenges rocking the state sugar firms.

"Skilled staff and employees are leaving the industry for better opportunities and remuneration in other sectors," Musebe says, adding that high cost of production by local public sugar factories is embedded in the traditional way the industry has operated over the years.

"Traditionally the local public sugar industry has been heavily politicized. Decision-making in these institutions has been hinged on government and political considerations, instead of considering business principles, leading to high production costs," he explains.

He says the cost of producing sugar by local public firms is exorbitant compared to millers within the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) sugar producing member's countries, such as Mauritius and Malawi.

Musebe who presides over Chemelil Sugar Company, which is a household name in the local sugar industry and a leading miller within the Nyando Sugar-belt, blames the high cost of production on the government's red-tape and bureaucratic decision-making process for the woes bedeviling the local public sugar companies.

"Unlike local private millers, locally owned public sugar companies must wait for decisions from the government to undertake certain business linked decisions. This red-tape impacts on business practice and cost," Musebe points out.

According to details published in the latest edition of the Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) Year Book on Sugar Statistics 2010, sugar production by local millers oscillated and averaged from a low ex-factory price of Kshs.79,580.00 per tonne of sugar in 2009 to a high price of Kshs. 82,860.00 per tonne as at August 2010.

The comparable production prices for Cost of Insurance and Freight (C.I.F) value of imported sugar landed at Kenya's port City of Mombasa during the same period under review was between Kshs.39,227.00 in 2009 and 51,610.00 per tonne in 2010.

Musebe says other factors that make local sugar production costly, especially in public owned factories, include bloated number of employees and the worn out and old state of production equipment and machinery at the factories.

Whereas the normal life span of sugar factories is between 10-15 years, most state owned factories operate machinery that were installed over 40 years ago. They are, to say the list, obsolete plants which cannot achieve international efficiency benchmarks.

He also singles out the drop in sugarcane yields especially within the Chemelil zone within Nyando Sugar-belt as another big challenge facing local public sugar firms like Chemelil Sugar Company. "Yields from cane varieties grown within Chemelil zone have declined. This is because the same cane varieties grown since the 1960s are the ones being relied upon by millers and farmers," Musebe says.

He also blames the decline on cane yields on exhausted soil fertility within Chemelil zone and the large



Chemelil Sugar Company Managing Director, Eng. Edward Musebe (extreme right) presents the newly launched Company Service Charter to the firm's Public Relations Manager Salim Bakari (in white shirt and tie) after the MD had formally launched the charter in the Company's Boardroom during a ceremony witnessed by the organization's heads of department, section of staff and stakeholders.

Photo By Bosco Magare

Nyando Sugar-belt and other sugarcane growing zones in the country, such as Mumias, Busia, and Nzoia and to some extent Awendo Sugar-belt zone adding that "the only exception is Kenya's coastal region where sugar farms are still large enough."

The general increase in country's population has also contributed to sub-division of formerly large-scale sugarcane farms within Chemelil zone into small-scale holdings, incapable of sustaining adequate cane supply to the factory.

Woes besetting the country's local sugar industry are also linked up to climate change. Musebe says the reliance by local sugar companies on rain-fed cane farming is also a major stumbling block to their growth.

"Chemelil Sugar Company for example relies on plant cane, which is rain-fed, compared to other COMESA sugar producing countries such as Sudan where sugarcane is grown under irrigation in firms like Kenana Sugar factory," Musebe says. Musebe says plant cane particularly in Chemelil zone is planted once a year and is not linked or matched to factory production capacity.

He argues that under irrigated cane farming some of the COMESA sugar producing countries is able to get high yields which are staggered throughout the year and which are matched to their factory capacities.

Musebe's sentiments about the local public sugar industry are largely shared by Sugar Campaign for Change (SUCAM) national co-ordinator Michael Arum.

Arum categorizes the challenges facing the local public sugar industry into two. They include challenges faced at the process or production level and those experienced at the farm level.

At the process level, Arum says local public sugar factories are encumbered due to limited crushing capacity.

"Currently, the local sugar industry crushing capacity can only mill an average of 13,285 metric tonnes of cane per day, yet the factories are rated at a capacity of 23,460 metric tonnes of cane per day," Arum says.

Arum laments that due to this under-utilization of factory capacity, the entire industry is using a capacity of

56.63 per cent. "So the local sugar industry is losing a lot of money due to under-utilized rated capacity." However, at the same time Arum.

The SUCAM boss also blames the dismal performance of state owned sugar companies on poor factory recovery ratios. Factory recovery implies the ratio between Tonnes of Cane and Tonnes of Sugar (TC/TS) that a factory is capable to achieve in terms of efficient processing of the final sugar product. "The TC/TS for the local sugar industry is very bad. We have an average of local factories crushing 10 tonnes of cane to produce one tonne of sugar translating into a TC/TS ratio of 10/1," Arum points out.

The SUCAM national co-ordinator says the TC/TS ratio for the local sugar industry is disturbingly low, compared to the ratio registered by millers in COMESA producing countries. "If the local sugar industry is compared with COMESA producing countries like Malawi and Swaziland, our TC/TS ratio is disappointingly low. Malawi and Swaziland's TC/TS ratio is about 7/1 making difficult for compete at COMESA level.

Locally, Arum points out only Mumias Sugar Company is comparable with these COMESA and other international sugar producing countries in terms of TC/TS.

Mumias has average TC/TS of 9.76/1 which is impressive by international standards, while the TC/TS for local public sugar producers like Muhoroni Sugar Company is 14/1 which is 200 per cent above world average. The TC/TS for the rest of the local sugar industry is 150 per cent and ranges between 11/1 and 13/1 adding that "local factories have no standards."

The SUCAM co-ordinator equally concurs with Chemelil Sugar Company MD Eng. Musebe that another bottleneck facing the local industry is low efficiency levels due to obsolete milling machinery. Besides, the state owned sugar factories are performing poorly because they are heavily indebted.

"Because of high indebtedness, these factories cannot attract loan facilities from commercial banks. Thus these factories continue to borrow from the government, particularly

through the industry regulator Kenya Sugar Board (KSB)," Arum says.

Arum points out that due to the inability of these local factories to source funds from commercial banks

For local public sugar factories to be able to modernize their plants they need capital. Hence having failed to secure funding from banks, some of the sugar companies turn to their large distributors for financing.

"At the moment local public sugar factories such as Muhoroni and Miwani, which are already under receiverships are greatly undercapitalized and cannot easily get loans for modernization or expansion," Arum says.

Arum appeals to the government to the rescue of these factories on this front by funding irrigation projects in the various sugarcane growing zones to improve cane production. He says this can be done under the Economic Stimulus Programme and Economic Recovery Strategy.

Arum was full of praise for the new entrants in the local sugar industry like Kibos Allied and Sugar Company in Nyando Sugar-belt and Butali and West Kenya Sugar Company in the Western Province, which have come to the rescue of farmers.

Arum also blames delayed payment of farmers cane proceeds for demoralizing growers and points an accusing finger at Sony Nzoia and Chemelil as the culprits. We however learnt that Chemelil Sugar Company has cleared all farmers payment arrears and is current in its payment to growers.

The challenges facing the local sugar industry cited by the two strategically placed stakeholders are equally ascertained by chairmen of board of directors in these firms led by Nzoia Sugar Company Chairman Eng. Julius Nyarotho.

Nyarotho equally echoes similar sentiments about the challenges gripping the local sugar industry, but goes a step further to unravel additional hurdles in the sub-sector.

For example, the Nzoia Sugar Company chairman, who has a wealth of experience in the local sugar industry, having worked at Chemelil Sugar Company during the tenure of government contracted international management firm Booker Tate and

later under an Africanized leadership rising to the post of Factory Manager, says weather is a critical challenge for the sub-sector.

Nyarotho who is also a former Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) director and chairman of the board says local sugar industry's reliance on rain-fed cane growing makes it susceptible to the vagaries of adverse weather conditions. "When there is no rain in some of the sugarcane growing zones in the country the crop does not do well," Nyarotho says.

Nyarotho also singles out infrastructure as a challenge in the industry, alongside high cost fuel especially diesel used by the factories including electricity supplied by Kenya Power Company. "Poor road infrastructure network in the sugar growing zones makes transport costs high for farmers and millers, while the cost of fuel such as diesel is very expensive," Nyarotho laments.

Nyarotho goes on to cite additional factors that hinder the performance of the local sugar industry which include corporate governance issues especially mismanagement by farmers outgrowers institutions and aging factories. "The farmers outgrowers institutions are a big disappointment and are in need of a total overhaul to ensure that they live to their mandate and delivery services to cane growers as expected of these institutions," Nyarotho advises.

Nonetheless, despite the emerging picture of a bleak state of the local sugar industry stakeholders interviewed by *The link* expressed optimism that opportunities exist to tap the huge potential in the sub-sector.

Eng. Nyarotho and Chemelil Sugar boss Musebe are convinced one of the viable opportunities existing for the local sugar industry is to venture into the under-exploited electricity sector in the country.

"Currently the country has a big power shortage which makes it difficult to achieve its goal of industrialization. Ironically, more than 10 per cent of the country's power requirements can be met by the local sugar industry. So this is an opportunity the industry can exploit," they urge industry stakeholders.

They say opportunities also exist for the industry to venture into ethanol power production for the local motor vehicle market adding that in Brazil sugar factories produce ethanol as a by-product which is used by specially designed flexi vehicles in the country's motors industry.

"Considering the current high oil and fuel prices prevailing in the country, the sugar industry can capitalize on this potential and embark on ethanol production which can be blended for use by the local motor industry," they argue.

The local sugar industry can take advantage of an already an existing Act of Parliament to have ethanol blended with petrol adding that "implementation of this Act will help the local sugar industry.

There is urgent need to privatize and modernize the local public sugar companies to enhance their sugar production capacities and output levels to exploit existing sugar demand.

**MORE STORIES ON
SUGAR INDUSTRY
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Head teachers root for more state funding

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya Secondary School Head Teachers Association wants the Government to allocate more funds to cater for the extra curriculum activities in schools.

The principals drawn from Kakamega County say that some schools had failed to take part in music festivals due to lack of funds after some parents refused to remit the Kshs78 approved by their respective District Education Boards (DEBs).

They said that most schools were currently operating on deficits and therefore cannot be able to finance extra curriculum activities.

The association's Regional Chairman Hezekiah Akang'o and the Matungu branch chairman Claves Kadima said the Kshs300 released by the Government per pupil was not enough to incorporate the extra curriculum activities as many schools have outstanding debts to clear.

Akang'o and Kadima explained that it was sad that the Government has only released about Kshs4,000 per student out of the expected Kshs10,650 allocated to each student round the year.

"The Government has not released half of the money despite the fact that the second term is nearing completion. This is difficult on our side as head teachers," said Kadima who was speaking during Matungu District Education Day.

The officials said they have been unable to pay both their workers and suppliers adding that it is becoming hard to convince some of them that schools were lacking enough money.

The head-teachers said that they were now contemplating sending students home to collect fees from the parents for effective management of the institutions.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) demanded that the Government makes clear its commitment to financing education.

The union's Kakamega County Council Secretary John Wesonga said that it was unfair for Education ministry not to allocate adequate funds for sports.

"The programme for music festival is known and I do not expect delays in release of the funds by the Government," said Wesonga.

He said that sporting activities should be scrapped if the Government is not ready to plan on how the students and teacher's welfare can be catered for.

Wesonga pointed out that it was sad that teachers were being forced to walk for long distances with pupils to reach the venue of music festivals due to lack of money.

Condemned Nanyuki school set for demolition



Some of the classes of CCM Nanyuki Primary School which have been condemned after the buildings developed huge cracks four years after they were built. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MILLIONS of shillings are set to go to waste after the Government condemned all the classes being used by pupils at CCM Nanyuki Primary School.

This is after the 16 classes started developing huge cracks which pose danger to the over 600 pupils using the classes built in year 2007.

The school which is situated at the boarder of Kieni constituency and Laikipia East constituency will now be demolished after the Government officials visited the area recently.

The officials drawn from the ministries of Public Health, Education, Public Works and National Management Environment Authority visited the school where they were shocked over the huge cracks due to shoddy job done by Isaac Njoroge Contractors.

They ordered the classes to be immediately brought down as they pose a big danger to the young children because the classes can collapse any time. The pupils are now learning under tents donated by UNICEF.

The classes which were built using stones were constructed after several donors gave financial resources to the school.

These organizations include Arid Lands Resource Management, Likii River Farm, Action Aid, World Bank jointly with the Kenyan Government among others.

"We are very much shocked that all

the millions used will now go to waste due to shoddy work by the contractor. We are dumbfounded now that the classes have been condemned. This might keep away donors in the area as they are very discouraged," said the area MP Hon Nemesyus Warugongo.

The MP and other leaders will now have to raise resources to set up other classes.

The leaders now want the Nanyuki based contractor to be blacklisted to

avoid disasters in future.

They also want him to use his money to build the classes.

Warugongo has since told the school administration to give him a full report of the classes so that he can forward it to Education Minister Prof Sam Ogeri.

Efforts to contact the contractor were fruitless as he could not be reached on his phone.

Meanwhile, the government has

intensified efforts to educate its citizens through the provision of Adult and Continuous Education.

Nyeri Central District Adult and Continuity Officer Mr Samuel Kambita said the programme was started in 1979 with the aim of eradicating illiteracy among adults.

He said that youths who are not enrolled in school were also benefiting from the programme to enable them make informed decisions and improve their livelihood.

Kambita said that adult education offers basic literacy which equips learners with reading, writing and numerical skills.

Kambita said that the post literacy offers further learning opportunities to the graduates.

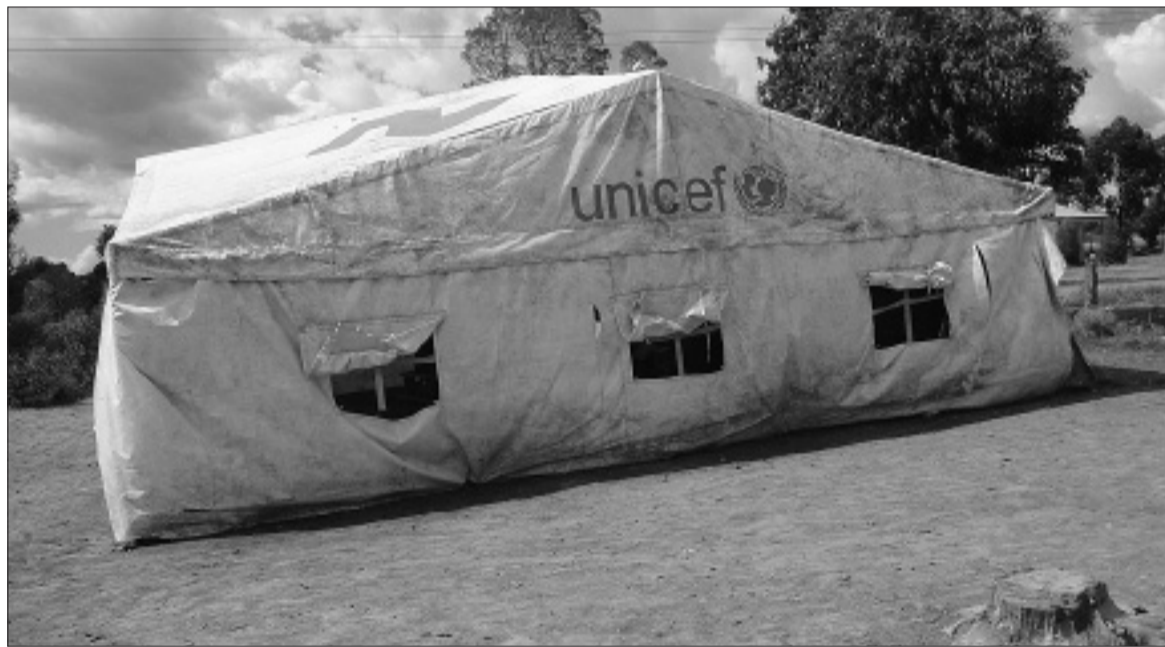
He said that the non-formal education addresses the learning needs of specific target groups.

The adult and continuing education officer said that the department has employed 18 full time and two part time teachers in the district.

Kambita said that there are 32 candidates registered for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) under the programme, out of which 10 are prisoners and 22 are free learners.

To maintain efficiency and quality in adult education, Kambita said the adult and continuity department meets monthly with the teachers to discuss professional issues.

Kambita also said that they encourage the learners to initiate projects to pull resources together and generate income.



Some of the tents the pupils of CCM Nanyuki Primary School are using for learning after the classes were condemned. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Teachers blamed for high drop out of girls from school

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE education of the girl child in western province is being threatened by early-marriages and pregnancies.

This observation was made recently by Kakamega Central District Kenya National Association of Parents (KNAP) Chair Mr. Daniel Oyalo.

Mr. Oyalo says that the rate of pregnancy among schoolgirls in the district is alarming and calls for immediate remedial measures. He blames this unfortunate state of affairs, which in most cas-

es lead to school dropout on some errant teachers.

The parents' association chair consequently appeals to the newly elected Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) officials not to protect teachers who engage in illicit sex with schoolgirls.

"KNUT officials should know that they are also parents and go slow while handling matters touching on illicit relationships between school girls and teachers," he says. Mr. Oyalo urges the newly elected KNUT officials to exhibit leadership maturity.

He asserts that KNUT officials

will be doing this nation a disservice to come out in teachers' defense without taking trouble to establish whether a professional misconduct has been committed or not.

"I think it is irresponsible leadership for the trade unionists to out-rightly dismiss or condemn people who raise the alarm about immoral activities in our education institutions without bothering to investigate the issues raised," he says.

As a result, Mr. Oyalo challenges KNUT officials to always engage other education stakehold-

ers in dialogue whenever there is an alleged misconduct in order to get to the bottom of the allegations. "Let us use dialogue to solve problems affecting our schools but not arrogance and name-calling", the KNAP chair pleads.

Mr. Oyalo asks parents to always involve KNAP, Chiefs, education officers and the police whenever their children's rights are violated by teachers or members of the public.

He cautions parents whose daughters become victims of sexual abuse against being compromised by the alleged perpetrators.

KIE unveils plans to start e-learning in schools

By TITUS MAERO

PLANS are underway to roll out the e-learning programme to selected schools in the country following the commissioning of a laboratory to provide digital learning at the Kenyan Institute of Education (KIE).

A Senior Communication Officer at KIE Mrs Susan Mwangi however says the initiative is not meant to re-place teachers but to increase access to education by learners.

She calls on teachers to acquire computer skills to enable them to effectively implement the e-learning programme.

Speaking at the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) in Kakamega, the officials said the government had given out ten computers per constituency in readiness for the launching of the e-learning programme.

She said various government programmes recognize that integration of e-learning and Information Communica-

tion Technology (ICT) in education would alleviate some of the classical problems among schools including wider access, quality, relevance and inclusiveness.

Mwangi said KIE had put up a digital centre to upgrade the use of ICT in public schools especially those which have electricity.

She said the national ICT strategy for education and training (2006) identifies key e-learning areas and capacity building, content digitalization, hardware and access to connectivity in line with the principles which govern ICT.

The official said, KIE being a parastatal in the Ministry of Education, is closely working with other stakeholders to ensure the e-learning programme is successful adding that it would require less teachers in schools which embrace the e-learning concept.

Mwangi further pointed out that with the ICT a single teacher can serve very many learners

in different schools noting that this would alleviate the teacher shortages in public schools in the country.

She said the country needs to become a technological economy where the creation, adaptation and use of knowledge will be among the most critical factors for the rapid economic growth.

The official said experience from countries which embrace e-learning such as South Korea, Malaysia, Finland, Ireland, China and Chile illustrate that rapid progress can be made over relatively shorter period of time by pursuing coherent strategies that build the capabilities to create access and use knowledge.

Mwangi added that the country's economic blue print thus Vision 2030 recognizes that the process of emergence of the knowledge economy is always associated with increase of technology related activities hence the need to support e-learning programme

Meanwhile, Education Permanent Secretary (PS) Professor James ole Kiyiapi has underscored the importance of promoting education as a basic human right and a tool for human resource development as exemplified in the new constitution.

Kiyiapi said the government has enacted policy initiatives that have put in place structures and mechanisms geared towards achieving Education For All (EFA) goals and enhanced transition from Primary to Secondary school process.

He was addressing Nyanza Secondary School Head Teachers during the 2011 Nyanza Provincial Annual Conference which was held at the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) in Kakamega.

The administrator told the head teachers at the 4-day-conference that the immediate challenge facing the country's education sector is to meet the human resource required for a

rapidly changing technology as a result of the education reforms. He asked head teachers to ensure that the education provided to students meet high quality standards and that its contents are relevant to the needs of the country's economy.

As part of the education reforms, he said, there is need to move rapidly in raising the standards of the schools in regions which lag behind in student enrolment to bring them at par with those from other parts of the country.

Kiyiapi noted that to address the issue of access and to improve overall literacy levels there is need for strategic objectives to be pursued including transition rate from Primary to Secondary, access to text book and address inequities between boys and Girls.

He also pointed out that there is need to improve the quality of education through recruitment of more teachers to improve the teacher to student ratio of 1.40.

Plans underway to harmonise EAC education curricula

By TITUS MAERO

PLANS are at an advanced stage to harmonise educational curriculum among East African Community (EAC) member states.

An MP in East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Mr Gervase Akhaabi says that once the curriculum is harmonized, teachers and students will be allowed to move freely within the region without restrictions.

Akhaabi says the harmonization process seeks to not only bridge existing gaps in the education sector but also create a unified framework to provide equal access to education and promote the sharing of knowledge among teachers and students among the countries.

He says the concept to transform selected schools into centres of excellence currently being undertaken by the Kenya government received overwhelming support during the 8th meeting of the Sectoral Council of Education Ministers held in Arusha, Tanzania in January 2011.

Speaking at Kakamega High School, which is a centre of excellence, Akhaabi noted that a harmonized system will ensure that high standards of education are maintained among all the partner states.

The legislator said a study on the status of education among member countries by the Inter-University Coun-



East African Heads of State. Photo/File

cil for East Africa (IUEA) proposed that the curricula be harmonized as a matter of priority in the integration process.

The lawmaker further said the EAC sectoral council had approved the e-learning process in the region in view of the large number of students who would wish to pursue further

education in their country of choice.

Akhaabi observed that majority of Kenyan youths were Information Communication Technology (ICT) compliant saying their expertise is required in countries such as Rwanda, Burundi and Southern Sudan where the level of IT was sparingly low.

The MP said the driving principle of the EAC, as per the Treaty, is to have

a people centered and market driven regional integration process adding that the Treaty specifies four pillars of integration namely Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union and ultimately a Political Federation.

Kanduyi MP advises local head teachers

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

KANDUYI MP Alfred Khang'ati has lashed out at head teachers for failing to prioritize development programs in their respective schools. Khang'ati says that headteachers prioritize unnecessary and luxurious projects at the expense of simple projects but which can assist the schools to improve on academic standards.

He points out that it is absurd for schools to buy posh buses at the expense of construction of more classrooms, libraries and laboratories.

"It does not make sense for a school to buy a Kshs7.million bus yet it does not have enough classrooms, or library and enough laboratories," he says. The MP reiterates that there is a trend by schools to invest in posh buses yet students have no where to learn and lack essential facilities.

He cautions head teachers against allocating the lion's share of their school's budget towards buying of buses. Khang'ati asserts that his constituency development fund committee (CDFC) will never fund for the purchase of buses.

The MP who is also an assistant minister in the office of the Prime Minister (PM) consequently asked head teachers not to waste time writing proposals geared towards the buying of buses to his CDFC. "My CDF Kitty will spend cash on laboratories and libraries and will never fund for the purchase of buses," he declares.

The assistant minister discloses that already his CDFC has disbursed Kshs 100,000 to every school in the constituency to set up computer labs.

Khang'ati made the remarks recently at Namachanja High School in Bungoma town in Bungoma County during Bungoma South District education day.

Varsities to admit over 150,000 in four years — Standa

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE Government has expressed its commitment to expand institutions of higher learning to accommodate increasing number of students.

Secretary of Commission for Higher Education Prof. Everett Standa said the institutions will be expanded to accommodate the first beneficiaries of Free Primary Education.

Standa who was speaking in Busia Town during Busia Dis-

trict Education Day, said public universities and their constituent colleges will be able to admit over 150,000 students in the next four years.

“The government will expand and upgrade educational facilities to meet the expected admission requirements,” said Standa who added that a number of institutions have already been identified for upgrading.

He said the move is expected to ease capacity challenges

and access to institutions of higher learning by qualified students.

Prof Standa said a record 32,611 students that sat for KCSE examination last year have been admitted to the universities through the Joint Admission Board adding that these was an increase by 8,000 students compared to 2009.

The secretary also noted that the government in bid to allow more students from semi arid and arid areas pursue

higher education will lower the cut off points by five points for students from such areas.

He said consultations were ongoing between public universities, Higher Education Loans Board and commission.

“At the moment we are aware that universities had not planned to admit students directly and therefore they might not have been prepared,” he said adding that students will be free to join once vacancies are availed.

Education PS warns against expulsion of students

By JOEL JUMA

The Government has ordered head-teachers to devise new methods of punishing errant students without violating their constitutional rights.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education James Ole Kiyapi said the Government will not allow head teachers to expel undisciplined students.

He said education has been made compulsory by the new Constitution, a matter which must be complied with.

Kiyapi explained that the views being given during the ongoing head-teachers conferences will be made part of new policies in the education sector.

“Let us air our views so that we can avoid being punished for expelling students who commit mistakes in schools. Education is now compulsory and powers to suspend have been removed by the new Constitution,” said Kiyapi.

Kiyapi was speaking at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology during the Nyanza Secondary Schools Head teachers Conference.

The meeting was also addressed by the association’s branch chairman Carilus Omijah and the Kenya Union of Post Primary Education of Teachers Kisumu County Chairman Zablon Awange.

Kiyapi said over 1 million children are still out of school despite the Government introducing Free Primary Education (FPE) policy.

He said efforts must be made to get the children to schools despite there being a shortage of over 61,000 teachers countrywide.

He said his Ministry has urged Treasury to allocate more funds in the sector to hire more teachers this year.

Kiyapi also warned head teachers against purchasing buses at the expense of putting up facilities like libraries. He said priority should be given to learning materials to improve academic standards.

The PS asked management of schools to expand facilities to avoid locking out students due to lack of space.

“You cannot stop a student who passed examinations from joining a school due to lack of accommodation space. This is a violation of his or her right,” said Kiyapi.

Kiyapi also disclosed that the Government was devising new methods of introducing performance contract for school managers.

The Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) has rejected the contracts.

The union national chairman Akello Misori said the contracts should not be introduced because teachers get evaluated during the release of national examinations.

The union’s national Vice Chairman John Awiti said head teachers should be given a special scheme of service.

Awiti said head-teachers handle more management cases other than teaching and should be motivated.

Muliro varsity suspends lecturer over exams

By JOEL JUMA

KAKAMEGA-based Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology has suspended a lecturer for engaging in examination irregularities.

The assistant lecturer is alleged to have, on various occasions, during examinations and marking sessions breached laid down rules.

The Director of Public Communication and Publishing Egara Kabaji indicated that the lecturer committed the offences on diverse dates between December 22, 2010 and May 3, 2011.

“Among other things, he tried to prepare a marking scheme and collect examination papers for certain courses without permission,” added Prof Kabaji.

He further said the lecturer was found to be in possession of answer scripts of courses in which he was not an internal examiner.

Kabaji added that the academic staff visited examination office seeking to proof read examination papers, which eventually went missing.



A section of Masinde Muliro University.

“As a result of these, the university has decided to suspend him from functions and

responsibilities of his office with immediate effect,” he reiterated.

Kabaji noted that investigations into the matter have since been launched.

Creation of new national schools continues to generate heat

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

OVER 400 principals of secondary schools from Nyanza have faulted the Government for allegedly not consulting them over the creation of national schools.

The head teachers said categorisation of schools into national, provincial and districts should be scrapped to avoid discrimination during admission of students into Form One.

Led by the Kenya Secondary Schools Head teachers Association National Vice Chairman John Awiti, the heads said categorisation would be in contrast with the new Constitution.

“All children are equal and require equal funding. Giving those in provincial schools more money compared to those in day schools amounts to discrimination,” said Awiti.

Mr. Awiti further said the

Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should make proposals on how it will be posting and transferring teachers after the scrapping of Provincial Directors of Education.

Awiti was speaking at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology during the Nyanza Provincial Head-teachers Association conference.

TSC head of Integrity Division Julie Ogoye disclosed that over 450 teachers from Nyanza could have been arrested last year for failing to submit their wealth declaration forms.

Ogoye said the trend should be discarded this year to avoid sacking of teachers who fail to comply with Government requirements.

“Many teachers are unable to declare their wealth because they have taken loans and over committed their pay slips with debts from hire purchase firms,” said

Ogoye.

The meeting was officially opened by the Nyanza PC Francis Mutie and attended by Provincial Directors of Education (PDEs) Geoffrey Cherongis (Nyanza) and Kenneth Misoi (Western).

Ogoye further warned that head teachers flouting procurement rules while purchasing goods risk being sent to jail.

She said the Government pumps billions of shillings in education sector, which need to be utilised as per the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education.

“You don’t need to move with your suppliers to another station after being transferred by the Government,” said Ogoye.

Misoi and Cherongis said reforms in the sector will see provincial conferences being phased out starting from next year.

They explained that the positions of PDEs will cease to exist

after 2012 elections.

The two said the Government is undertaking reforms to ensure that the sector complies with the policies of Vision 2030 and the new Constitution.

Masinde Muliro’s Vice Chancellor Baraza Wangila and Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) Kisumu County Chairman Zablon Owange said there was need for quality education to be promoted in all schools.

Wangila said the students who cheat in national examinations should be punished as per the examination regulations.

The Provincial Chairman Carilus Omijah said the Government should hasten release of funds meant to finance education in schools.

The two said head teachers are finding it hard to manage schools due to lack of funds caused by delays at Treasury.

By BOB OMBATI

Kisii varsity set to transform education system in the area

KISII University College (KUC) has embarked on an ambitious plan that seeks to incorporate partners in promoting high standards of education and ensuring effective delivery of the curriculum.

The university has partnered with Kisii level five hospital to offer courses in Clinical Medicine and Pharmacy. It is also working closely with Minnesota University, USA, in an educational exchange program to enhance the quality of education.

The Principal, Prof. John Akama says KUC has also entered into a memorandum of understanding with Nanjing University in China where lecturers from the university are to be deployed to the institution as their counterparts from KUC undertake their Phd programmes at the Chinese University.

The don said the College has also introduced new degree programmes in Actuarial Science, Law, Computer Software Engineering, Business management, Information Communication Technology, (ICT) Agriculture and Health Sciences.

He disclosed that a 5000- capacity multi-million modern library, lecture halls and a seven storeyed ICT centre are under construction while hostels and offices had been completed to accommodate the swelling student population.

The College has also established ultra mural outreach activities to serve as the linkage between the university and community members in order to sensitize the public on the role of the university in promoting socio-economic and cultural development in the society.

The institution has also launched an initiative that seeks to empower residents on preventive measures

against HIV/AIDs, drug abuse and land misuse to enhance socio-economic development in the area.

The Principal says the institution is also conducting research in selected areas to help farmers embrace fish farming and promote better animal and crop husbandry practices to increase productivity.

He says continued subdivisions of land in Gusii region poses a threat to food security and challenges community members to halt the practice and venture into intensive farming to help generate more revenue to boost their living standards.

Prof. Akama told *The Link* that highly developed countries focused on specialized farming where huge tracts of land are set aside for large scale farming unlike locally

economic resources.

"This is the reason why the University has come up with intervention measures to address the problems which are affecting our people including the spread of HIV/AIDS," said Akama.

The principal at the same time points out that the student population had increased from 700 in 2009 to over 9000 this year as the demand for University education goes up and projected that figure is likely to go up to 30,000 by 2014.

The Principal urged the government to establish a university in each County to absorb more students, some of whom were seeking expensive university

education in foreign countries, impoverishing their parents and guardians.

"I urge parents to help their children acquire first degrees from our universities and pursue their Masters and Doctor of Philosophy (Phd) degrees abroad if necessary," said Akama, adding that Kenyan universities also offered quality university education at all levels with their certification recognized and accepted globally.



Part of the College buildings

where land is subdivided into uneconomic units, leading to prolonged famine.

He said the problem has been compounded by increased rates of drug abuse which had resulted in high levels of poverty due to the wastage of human and eco-



Kisii varsity students planting in one of the farms.



Kisii University Administration Block.

A tale of two Kakamega councils

By JOEL JUMA

THE Parliamentary Committee on Local Authorities has given the Kakamega County Council a clean bill of health over its usage of devolved funds. The County Council Chairman John Shimaka and Clerk Patrick Kamwessar got credit from committee members for explaining how the council spent over Kshs126 million on projects.

But the neighbouring Kakamega Municipal Council was put on the spot for failing to explain how the council used over Kshs50 million it received from the ministry of Local Government as Local Authority Transfer Fund. Committee members led by MPs Nemesuis Warugongo and Wilson Litole expressed concern that the municipal council had no tangible projects in the wards.

The two legislators took the chief officers and councillors led by the town Mayor Vincent Anjeche to task for not initiating projects, which include street-lights. "It is sad that the residents are not getting the right services despite the huge allocation to the council," said Warugongo.

Residents told the committee at the Municipal Hall that the council is not able to pay the suppliers for goods due to lack of funds. Warugongo lamented that Kakamega traders were still operating in an open air market despite a joint initiative by the Government and World Bank to finance the construction of a modern market at Kshs154 million.

The Council Clerk Newton Mukabwe however could not explain some of the issues exhaustively as he was still new in the office. He told the committee that most of the projects were not in place due to delays by contractors to implement them.

Education ministry did not return funds to treasury—official

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Government has refuted claims that the Ministry of Education was among government departments that had returned funds to the treasurer.

The Director of Policy, Partnership and East Africa Community Affairs in the Ministry of Education, Mr. Kiragu Magochi says the claims are baseless.

He says the Ministry was currently agitating for additional funds for the hiring of additional teachers to take care of the staff shortage. He says since the introduction of the Free Primary Education, the number of pupils had grown to an extent where the current number of teachers is unable to handle the population. Mr. Magochi spoke in Embu recently where he was the chief guest during the Embu West District Education Day held at Kangaru Girls High School.

He says the Ministry has established a task force that is moving round the country to review the curriculum to conform to the provisions of the new constitution. The official points out that the findings of the task force will be used to fill the gaps identified in the counties across the country. He says in Embu County, there are more boys enrolled in schools but drop out of school along the way. Magochi says the Government was also working with other East African partner states in the setting up of standards that would enhance the interaction of graduates from the region.

Knut calls for scheme of service for nursery teachers

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) wants the Government to formulate a scheme of service for nursery school teachers.

The union's demand follows the allocation of Kshs387.7 million to the sector by Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta in this year's Budget.

Knut praised Uhuru for allocating funds to the sector and said it is now up to Education Minister Sam Ongeri to plan how the Government will employ over 20,000 nursery teachers.

"Uhuru has played his role

and the union wants to watch how Ongeri will behave after getting the allocations," said the newly elected Knut Second Vice Chairman Wycliffe Omucheyi.

Omucheyi and Knut officials drawn from Kakamega, Vihiga and Bungoma counties said they will not allow Ongeri to sleep on the job after he receives over Kshs200 billion for this financial year.

Omucheyi and Kakamega County union secretary John Wesonga, Hamisi branch executive secretary Nathaniel Shibiru and Kenya Special Schools Headteachers Association national chairman Arthur Injenga urged

the Ministry of Education to formulate a scheme of service for the nursery teachers.

They said the scheme should enable nursery school teachers to move upwards after they are employed.

Prof Ongeri had early this year said the Government was considering employing nursery teachers. His Permanent Secretary James Ole Kiyapi also added his voice to the matter.

Ongeri and Kiyapi said they had requested the Treasury to allocate the funds for nursery teachers.

Kiyapi also said the remaining 20 per cent salary hike for teachers is to be paid this year if treasury al-

locates money to the ministry.

The officials also said they were happy that the Government has allocated more funds to the Constituencies. They explained that the Constituency Development Fund benefits many needy children through bursaries.

The fund has been increased from Kshs14 billion of last year to Kshs17 billion.

Omucheyi and Wesonga challenged MPs to ensure projects in the education sector are completed before the next General Elections. "MPs should use the money wisely to avoid being blamed when they wind up their term," said Omucheyi.

Ministry keen on improving education quality – Oyaya

By TITUS MAERO

THE Ministry of Education Director of Quality Assurance Enos Oyaya has said the government is fully committed to ensuring that education is accessible to all children in line with the new constitution.

Oyaya said that it is for this reason that the government has accelerated reforms in the education sector with a view to addressing the overall goals of the National Economic Recovery (NER) for employment and wealth creation.

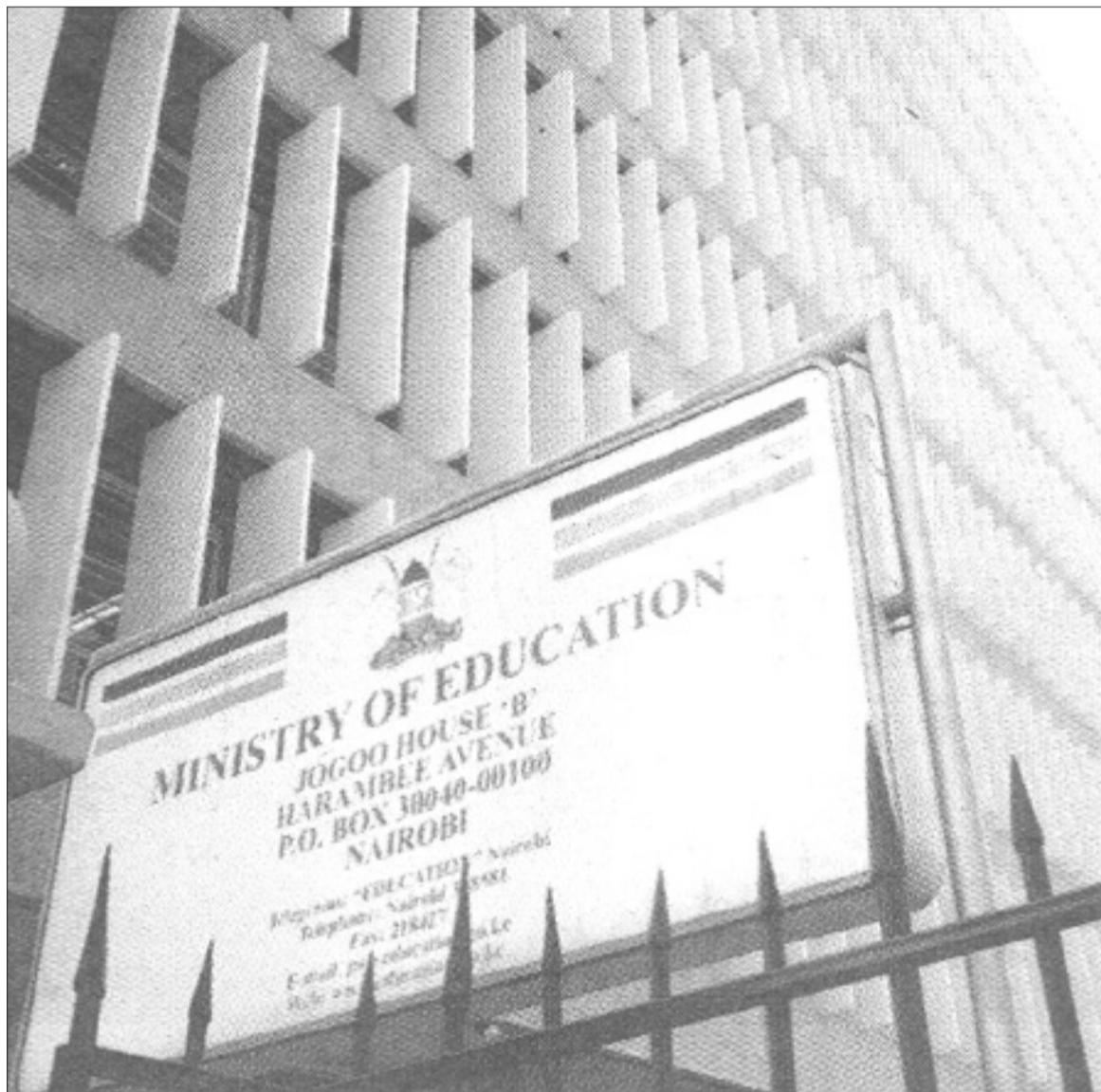
He said that in a bid to demonstrate its support for reforms in the education sector, interventions have been put in place to address the education development in the country.

Speaking during the Kakamega East District Education day held at the Mukumu Girls Secondary School, the official named some of the education intervention measures as Community Support Grant (CSG) and disbursement of grants for laboratory equipments.

He, at the same time urged school committees and the community at large to ensure that the funds earmarked for each of these programmes is not diverted but utilized in a prudent manner to the satisfaction of the public.

He pointed out that through the Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) the ministry of education has been able to improve education standards at all levels in the country.

Oyaya said that the sessional paper no. 1 of 2005 sets the policy frame work



Jogoo House: Headquarters of Ministry of Education.

upon which all educational programmes and activities outlined in KESSP are based.

The Director observed that the ministry of education has developed a service charter and a strategic plan which are geared towards provision of quality service for the education sector.

He said other measures and

reforms that the ministry of education has put in place to enhance access, transition, retention and completion rates include prohibition of forced repetition by students, introduction of free tuition in secondary schools, enhancement of a policy on expanding existing schools to a minimum of three streams among oth-

ers.

He asked the school committees to embrace modern approaches to the management of the learning institutions by putting in place Quality Management Systems (QMSs) and setting targets and the end to be innovative and embrace result based management practices.

Mudavadi tells school committees to be ready for change

By TITUS MAERO

THE Deputy Prime Minister Musalia Mudavadi has asked school committees to brace themselves for changes anticipated in the education sector once the new constitution becomes fully operational. Mudavadi notes that most structures in schools will be reorganized in order to meet the demands of the new constitutional dispensation. He at the same time calls on the members of Board of Governors (BOGs), Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) to align their activities to proposed reforms in the education sector.

Speaking during the Sabatia Education day held at the Chavakali Secondary School, the Local Government Minister said the committees will need to develop organizational structures that are receptive to the reformed education sector.

“We need to be focused not on opportunity challenges but on debating on the nature of education reforms,” he said adding that it would be difficult to meet education reforms with old style of leadership.

The Sabatia MP noted that there is need to change attitude on how to deal with defiant students and also know how to handle non motivated students who perform below their abilities to enable them excel in national exams.

Butere risks losing institute for lack of land

By JOEL JUMA

The Ministry of Education may be forced to relocate a Kshs500 million technical training institute project from Butere District due to lack of land. The project financed by the African Development Bank is part of other initiatives being implemented in different parts of the country.

The Director for Technical Training in the Ministry of Higher Education Owate-Wambayi however expresses dismay over delays to identify land for the project by leaders in Butere.

In a letter addressed to the area DC Seif Matata, Wambayi is demanding that leaders confirm whether they have identified land for the construction of the institute.

“The Ministry of Higher Education has engaged consultants to develop designs for the institutes. It is unfortunate that records indicate that there is no land title deed in Butere despite several requests,” reads part of Wambayi’s letter to the DC.

The letter dated May 31, 2011 has been copied to the offices of Western PC and Provincial Director of Technical Training.

Planning minister Wycliffe Oparanya had indicated that the institute will be constructed in Butere. He said he scouted for land near Butere Girls for the project.

Oparanya said the Anglican Church of Kenya, Butere Diocese had agreed to hive off part of Butere Girls land for the institute.

“We resolved to have part of the school land be set aside for the institute,” said Oparanya. Oparanya explained that another alternative was to have the Butere/Mumias County Council allocate land for the project. The Council Chairman Michael Keya and councillor Johnstone Maloba said the council was ready to allocate land for the project. “Wambayi should not take the project elsewhere as we are ready to provide land,” said Maloba.

KCB donates computers to schools in Western

By JOEL JUMA

A SECONDARY school in Kakamega County has received computer donations after missing out on Kshs 30 million meant to transform it to a center of excellence.

Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) donated dozens of computers to St Peters Mumias High School for its exemplary performance in last year’s national examinations.

KCB Chief Executive Officer Martin Oduor had promised to equip some schools in Kakamega and Vihiga counties.

Nyang’ori High school in Vi-

higa County is one of the beneficiaries of computers

KCB Mumias branch Manager Eliud Siganga said the bank has set aside over Kshs7.5 million to equip schools with information technology (IT) facilities.

Siganga said that Mumias was one of the schools selected by the bank to be a beneficiary. “We are promoting the use of IT in schools so that the introduction of E-learning in schools does not fail when the programme roles out,” said Siganga.

Siganga was speaking at St Peters Mumias High School during the official handing over of

the computers to the school.

The Principal Godfrey Owuor said the school requires over 100 computers to cater for the student population.

He said the school’s population currently stands at 1, 200 students and 40 computers were not enough to serve all students.

He said the students were being forced to share computers during lessons. “I need more computers as the number of students developing interest in IT is increasing by day,” said Owuor.

The school Board of Governors Chairman Maurice Lukano said efforts must be made to have more computers purchased

by the school. He explained that the donation made by KCB will boost computer studies in the school.

The school was left out during the disbursement of Kshs30 million by the Government despite qualifying for the funds.

Area MP Ben Washiali was accused of diverting funds to Mwitoti Secondary School. Washiali however said the money was not enough for the two schools to share.

District Education Board (DEB) Secretary Mohamoud Kamaya is said to have played a role in giving the money to Mwitoti.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

Political will needed to save sugar firms

ALL is not well with the sugar sector in Kenya, especially the state-controlled sugar factories. Years of political interference, corruption and inefficiency have ensured that the public sugar firms are performing way below expectations compared to the privately owned ones. The public sugar firms are incurring staggering losses, running into hundreds of millions of shillings.

The public sugar companies, some of which are as old as independent Kenya, are yet to even realize their rudimentary potentials. Challenges facing the factories are numerous but not insurmountable with good governance.

Industry analysts have identified the following as the most devastating challenges facing the sector that require urgent fixing if the state owned firms are to become competitive. They include political interference and patronage, outdated mills, bloated workforce, corruption, delayed payment to cane farmers, poor quality cane seed, poor infrastructure, rain-fed farming and under capitalization.

Other factors responsible for poor performance of the state owned sugar firms are high cost of producing sugar as compared to millers within the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) sugar producing member countries such as Mauritius and Malawi.

According to details published in the latest edition of the Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) Year Book on Sugar Statistics 2010, sugar production by local millers oscillated and averaged from a low ex-factory price of Kshs. 79,580.00 per tonne of sugar in 2009 to a high price of Kshs. 82,860.00 per tonne as at August 2010. The comparable production prices for Cost of Insurance and Freight (C.I.F) value of imported sugar landed at Kenya's port City of Mombasa during the same period under review was between Kshs. 39,227.00 in 2009 and 51,610.00 per tonne in 2010. The question is: why should imported sugar be cheaper than locally produced ones?

With the COMESA protection of the local sugar market from competition from other COMESA member countries like Sudan and Malawi coming to an end by February next year, the problems facing the local state-owned sugar companies are set to quadruple. The unfortunate thing is that it is almost too late to put measures in place to enable the firms to compete favorably as was advised by COMESA.

When COMESA extended a moratorium to Kenya, it was attached with certain conditions which the government is yet to fulfill. One of them was to ensure privatization of state owned sugar factories by the end of 2009.

In addition, the government was expected to ensure that local public owned sugar factories have adopted the sucrose-based cane payment system to make local firms competitive instead of the current system pegged on payments pegged on cane weight. Only Nzoia Sugar Companies has met this condition.

The road infrastructure remains bad and the cane seed available to farmers were those developed almost forty years ago. In short the state has done very little to help prepare its factories for the coming stiff competition from sugar giants from COMESA and Central America.

Why the reforms have not been undertaken is a real source of concern to many. Or is it due to politics as usual. It is time to expedite the passage and immediate implementation of the Sugar Amendment Bill 2011 that is currently lying before parliament.



COMMENTARY

Let Kisumu councilors elect their mayor freely

THE Local Government Act CAP 265 provides in respective sections as follows:

12. (1) "For every municipality there shall be a municipal council established under this Act and every municipal council shall consist of such number of councilors as may be elected, nominated or appointed under section 26."

13. (1) "The mayor of a municipal council shall be elected by the council from among the councilors at the first meeting of the council and subsequently at each second annual meeting of the council and, a mayor elected in the year 1968 or later shall hold office until the next annual meeting but one of the council."

14. (1) "The mayor shall be elected by the councilors present, by secret ballot, and such election shall be the first business transacted at the first meeting of the council, and thereafter at each second annual meeting of the council"

It is clear, according to provisions of Article 14(1), that no other person, who is not a member of the council, has authority to choose a mayor. This Article also provides for election of the mayor to be done "by secret ballot", as a way of protecting the participating councilors from intimidation and ensuring that democracy prevails.

Kisumu Municipal Council must live up to the spirit and letter of this law in conducting the next mayoral elections. An entrenched interest group that benefits from many years of malfunctioning governance system in the council is however out to ensure that this does not happen. High level lobbying is currently going on targeting opinion leaders in Kisumu and amongst top government and political leadership of the region and country for the councilors to be prevailed upon to simply walk into the council chambers, in the name of elections, to rubber-stamp the lobbyists' interest of retaining the current Mayor, Sam Okello, no matter the view of councilors.

Kisumu Municipal Council has become a bad example where electoral process is not given a chance in determination of leadership. Since 1999, Article 26(2) has been used to nominate new people to be councilors so as to be mayor whenever a vacancy arises. The only exception was Cllr. Prisca Auma who was an elected councilor at the time of the vacancy that she filled as mayor. But it should be remembered that this vacancy arose as a result of revocation of nomination of Clarkson Otieno Karan, who had earlier been nominated so as to be mayor.

All these nominations of external personalities to take over as mayor have never been popular with councilors. Their feelings are understandable on the basis that some, if not all of them, stood for elections with ambitions of convincing their colleagues to be elected as mayor. Their ambitions are thus stifled when people who did not bother to go

COMMENT
By JOSHUA NYAMORI

through the rigor of an electioneering process are nominated to lead them.

Kisumu Municipal councilors are vehemently opposed these external forces that influence these nominations. Once pressure is brought to bear on R.H. Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga, the lobbyists know that the councilors have very little space for maneuver. When in 1999 the then councilors resolved to defy an order to rubber-stamp a decision to make the then newly nominated Shakeel Shabir mayor, violence marred a full council meeting convened to endorse an independent candidate. The violence followed the councilors to their houses which were broken into and their families subjected to terror and intimidation. They had little options but to reconvene and rubber-stamp Shakeel's installation.

While councilors and other stakeholders in Kisumu thought that the 1999 incident was an exception, it is clear 12 years down the road that it is now the norm rather than the exception that, if not checked, will have far reaching ramifications on emergence of leadership in Kisumu and the entire Nyanza province.

The excuse advanced by lobbyists who push for imposition of external people to lead Kisumu Municipal Council is normally that Kisumu, as an important urban center, needs better skills and exposure than that brought in by elected councilors. I have always found this argument to be fundamentally faulty. The first question that we should ask is: why does the electoral process not churn into the council the so called "skilled and exposed" personalities? Why must they be nominated and not elected by the people? The answer lies in interference of the electoral process by this same group who later lobby on choice of mayor.

The residents of Kisumu know that because of stifled democratic space that brooks no dissent, either within the dominant political party or through alternative parties; the choices of the masses will rarely get elected as councilors. This has discouraged many credible personalities from running for electoral positions, including civic seats. It is therefore dishonest for the same group to turn round and influence nomination of certain personalities and then impose them on elected councilors.

Interactions with elected civic leaders in Kisumu has proved to me that despite the popular view, we have amongst them exceptionally intelligent individuals who also bring into the council diverse skills and experiences from various fields. Save for Shakeel who had a Masters degree in Finance, none of the nominated mayors has

ever brought in any exceptionally special academic qualification that would put to shame that of the elected councilors.

The unfortunate effect of the continued imposition of nominated mayors on the elected Kisumu Municipal councilors is the fact that such mayors owe their allegiance, not to the councilors or the people, but rather to the lobbyist who influence their imposition. In total disregard of the Local Government Act, elected councilors are then alienated from management of the council, as the mayor runs council affairs only with participation of chief officers, whose posting to the council is normally also a result of lobbying to the Ministry of Local Government and as such do not feel accountable to the councilors but to the same lobby groups who influence their appointments. The Management of Municipal Council of Kisumu, thanks to the power of the lobbyist, is therefore an exemplification of the worst form of bad governance, corruption and impunity. The law and the interest of the public in service delivery are pushed to the periphery as interests of these lobbyists, which revolve around lucrative tenders, contracts and council resources like land, take sway. The public who seek to participate in council affairs through their elected leaders are left as hopeless as their councilors.

It is unfortunate that such a leadership tragedy, with significant adverse development consequences is taking place in Kisumu municipality, one of the biggest urban centers in Kenya with a population of more than 700,000 and growing at an estimated annual rate of 2.8percent. Moreover, almost 60percent of this population lives in informal settlements. The situation in these informal settlements paints an appalling picture of the conditions of urban poverty. The level of congestion in these areas is worrying, with basic sanitation infrastructure like water supply and toilets missing.

The overall health situation in the informal settlements is critical. Slum residents in Kisumu currently have worse health and reproductive health conditions than in rural areas surrounding Kisumu City. School enrolment rates are for both males and females is terribly low with residents experiencing the greatest lack of income opportunities. In addition, the children in the slums have the highest mortality rates. Security for the urban poor in Kisumu City has deteriorated to worrying levels. The poor often have no access to land and security of tenure and many are landless and squatters. Moreover, the problems related to adequate shelter are now tremendous, although shelter and housing are considered as basic needs for human survival.

In a town where population growth rates are high by any standards; where industries have collapsed; where employment opportu-



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Enhancing governance for all

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Economic Secretary speaks on public finance

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE punishment recommended for those who loot public funds in the new Public Finance Management is too lenient and cannot be a deterrent to the vice, participants told a public forum to discuss the Bill in Nyeri.

They told the forum that the proposed five year jail term and Kshs3 million fine will not be enough to safeguard the billions of shillings the devolved governments will be expected to handle.

The forum chaired by the Economic Secretary in the Ministry of Finance Dr Kamau Thugge recommended that besides higher penalties commensurate with the amounts stolen, such monies needed to be recovered from the looters and their estates to prevent losses by the public.

Speaking at Town Hall in Nyeri town, Thugge said besides consolidating the various laws that govern public finance management, the new law is expected to introduce a more rigorous accounting and auditing regime in public finance management through new budgeting and accounting systems at both the county and central government levels.

He said the Ministry of Finance, which is working hard to be compliant with the requirements of the Constitution, was aware of the shortfall in key financial management staff and had started a study to identify areas of training when the county governments come into effect in August next year.

Current estimates indicate that the ministry will need some 8,000 accounts staff to ensure sound financial management staff in all the



Some of the participants at the Public Finance Management forum at Town hall in Nyeri town recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

47 counties.

On fears that devolved funds will follow the trend taken by other decentralized funds like the Constituency Development Funds, the Local Authority Transfer Fund and the Local Authority Service Delivery funds, the Economist said they expected that county governments will not have huge bureaucracies that will eat up most of their budgets, but that they will have a lean staff

that will allow them to leave most of their money for development and service delivery.

He added that they expected improved governance and that among the checks the bill introduces is a situation where the secretaries for finance in both the county and national government will not be able to draw money from the various funds without the approval of the County Assembly and Parliament.

Lurambi residents call for fair allocation of CDF

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

EDUCATION stakeholders in Lurambi constituency in Kakamega County are up in arms over the alleged biased allocation of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in the area.

Stakeholders led by the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) officials, Primary and Secondary schools heads, provincial administration and parents accuse area MP Manyala Keya of having a strong bias against other areas.

Mt. Kenya University don Prof. Momi Wekesa says there is wide disparity in the allocation of CDF among the constituency's three (3) administrative divisions.

Prof. Momi singles out Navakholo division as the most sidelined area in terms of public resource allocation and improvement of infrastructure.

KNUT officials led by Kakamega Central branch executive secretary Mr. Nathan Bitonye, Primary and Secondary schools heads led by Mr. Isaac Wakhisi and Boniface Okoth respectively echo his sentiments.

Mr. Wakhisi claims that most primary schools lack enough classrooms because the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) does not allocate funds to schools in the



Mr. Manyala Keya, Lurambi MP.

division nowadays.

He alleges that during the recent disbursement of CDF monies to development projects, the entire division received a paltry Kshs. 600,000 out of the millions the CDFC received from the treasury.

"What impact can Kshs 600,000 have in a region with 21 public primary schools 19 public secondary and other projects in the health and water sectors," he poses.

He notes with regrets that Navakholo division with a population

of 89,722 people may be forced to import manpower in future if the academic standard in the area is not improved.

Mr. Wakhisi attributes the declining academic standards to lack of teachers motivation and failure by the CDFC to sponsor evaluation tests.

"A common trial exam in the division is not enough to enhance academic performance," he observes.

Mr. Okoth says that disparity in CDF distribution in the constituency impacts negatively on the Kenya certificate of secondary education (KCSE) performance in the area.

He appeals to Keya, who is also the Gender and Children Affairs assistant minister to rise above parochial inclinations and serve the entire Lurambi constituency without bias against any area.

Lurambi constituency with a population of 297,294 people has been split into two to form Lurambi and Navakholo constituencies.

The current sitting MP Manyala Keya is placed in Lurambi constituency, hence he will not solicit for votes in Navakholo constituency during the 2012 general election.

His critics read mischief in his recent allocation of public resources saying he is focusing on the 2012 general elections at the expense of a section of taxpayers in the constituency.

Uhuru draws CDF curtain

From Page 1

able at the local level but also relieve fiscal pressures on the County governments. "CDF can be restructured to serve as an overlapping and redundant system that checks and compliments the executive powers of the central and county governments," he suggests.

He says that CDF should be seen alongside other devolved funds such as Women Enterprise Fund, Bursary fund and Youth Enterprise Fund.

Dr Bagaka proposes that these funds be devolved to the sub-county level but should not constitute part of the 15 percent devolved to county governments.

"Sub-counties as currently conceived should be the current constituencies given that most of these funds are already constituency-based. Administrators of these funds/CDF at the sub-county level must be appointed competitively by the proposed county public service boards," he elaborates.

He, however, proposes that MPs role in the management of CDF be limited to oversight on Sub-county matters. "In fact, this oversight role will be complimented by the County elected officials," he explains.

However, the key question now is the legitimacy of CDF in the new constitution. Critics feel this option will not only serve in protecting the status quo but also subvert the spirit of the new Constitution.

Article 186 of the Constitution has transferred all functions to only two levels of government namely the national and county levels. Further Articles 202 and 203 which deals with equitable shares mandate only the two levels of government to equitable shares of revenue raised nationally.

"Clearly there is no room for CDF under the new constitution. This is because the Constitution has clearly responded to the marginalized communities and the lack of services in parts of the Country by creating the equalization fund," adds Wanjiru Gikonyo who is the Executive Director of TISA.

She says that issues of inequality are

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CDF Board dismisses NTA reports as inaccurate

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA and
JOEL JUMA

THE Constituency Development Fund Board has dismissed a report by the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) on Mukurwe-ini projects as inaccurate, incomplete and misleading.

Speaking after touring several projects in Mukurwe-ini, the CDF national board PR manager Mr George Muruli says it was in bad taste for NTA to list the Mukurwe-ini Central division (DO's) administration block project as non-existent since the project kicked off last year and it is almost complete.

The project committee chairman Mr Joseph Maina told the manager that the report was untrue since the project which is situated at Ichamara area started in November last year after CDF funded it to the tune of Kshs 710,000 which has so far been used.

The project is now awaiting additional funding of Kshs 0.3 million in order to be fully complete. About 80 per cent of the work has been done.

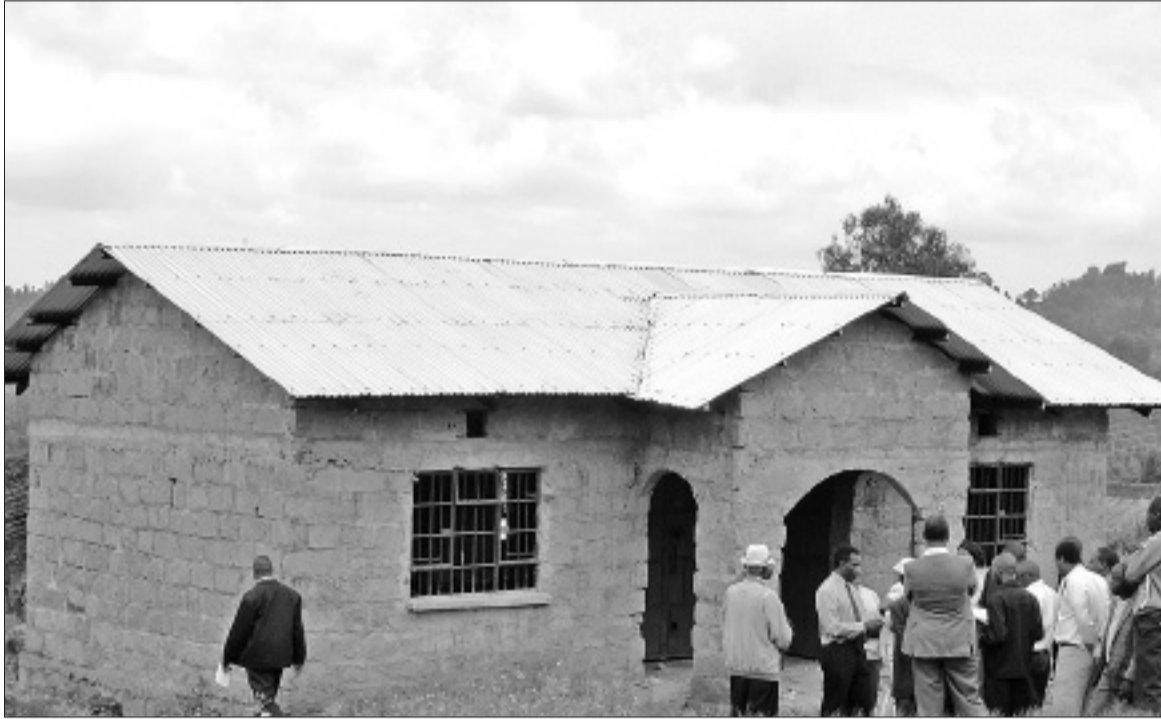
At the neighbouring Kihate Orphans Secondary School's dormitory, about 80 per cent of the work has been done and principal Mrs Irene Ndichu confirmed that over Kshs0.4 million has so far been utilized although the report says the cash allocated to the project cannot be accounted for.

Gatura Water Project which NTA said is not in use since it is incomplete is fully operational and supplying water to over 2,000 households.

The 225 cubic meters storage/pressure tank was built at a cost of Kshs3.1 million and supplies water to Githiru, Kahutiini, Kariko-ini, Gathare, Mbari ya Njue, Kariara and Ikui areas.

"We have taken time to study and analyze all the reports of all constituencies adversely mentioned in the article with the conclusion that the description of the procedure used to determine the accuracy and completeness of the information is questionable, The reports are inaccurate, incomplete and represent a very serious error in reporting," said Muruli.

The report further said that Gakindu Primary School was allocated Kshs300,000 and yet it doesn't exist while Kinuri Primary School which exists has never been allocated any funds but the report says it was funded Kshs250,000. Kihuti Secondary School is alleged to have received Kshs1.2 million for the Science laboratory and yet it had received only Kshs560,000. The Gakira- Rurair-Thukuma road project in Mukurwe-ini constituency is reported by the NTA to be incomplete. To the contrary, the Resident Roads Engineer confirms



Mukurwe-ini Central Division's Administration Block project which the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) reported as a ghost project. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

that the project was completed to his satisfaction and he issued a completion certificate.

Mukurwe-ini is represented in parliament by Youths assistant Minister Mr Kabando Wa Kabando who is the patron of the CDF kitty. The CDF Board, however appreciates efforts by NTA in ensuring efficient and effective management of tax payers money.

"The board in the same breath would appreciate NTA conducting its future audits more comprehensively and engage in consultations with the CDF Board so as to ensure that all the information provided in the reports are accurate and in line with the projects on the ground," he added.

He requested the NTA to suspend any further CDF related audits until all the issues raised have been satisfactorily addressed and a mutual agreement on processes and procedures to be followed for all future audits has been made.

In Funyula Constituency, seven projects reported by NTA as non-existent in the constituency are at the center of row. NTA indicated in its report that the Funyula Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee funded ghost projects. A primary school reported to have been funded to the tune of Kshs 200, 000 is said to be non-existent.

Cabinet Minister Paul Otuoma, who is the area MP, however demanded that the organisation proves that they went to the school. "The school

in the report does not exist in Funyula. The same can be proved by the Samia District Education Office," said Otuoma.

Otuoma wondered why the association was quoting projects not found in his constituency. "There is no such school in Funyula constituency," said Otuoma. The report by the board said the school does not even appear in the list of projects to be implemented.

The board's Public Relations Manager George Muruli who was on the ground with the Constituency Development Fund team led by the Fund's Manager Wilson Okumu said they were shocked that NTA quoted projects that are not in the area.

Records from the education office indicate that Bururu Primary School does not exist. Muruli and Okumu did not trace the school. NTA National Coordinator Davis Adieno and the organisation's Coordinator in Charge of Regions Martin Nabisa however said the school was funded to the tune of Kshs200, 000.

They said the school was identified on project code as 4-90-177-3110202-104-045-009 during the allocation of the funds to it by the Board and the constituency committee. "This code indicates the money was released and that is why it was given a code," said Nabisa. He said the CDF team should explain where the money went.

Nabisa explained that some projects were incomplete due to lack of funds while others have stalled after

money was re-allocated to other areas.

Nabisa said Nabunganda borehole, Kahakaiti bore, rehabilitation of Sigalame water tank, Sio Port water supply and Murondo water spring projects were financed by the Government during the 2006/2007 financial year.

Former Vice President Moody Awori was the MP then. Otuoma could not explain the matter. "I was not the MP at that time," said Otuoma. He said the Ministry of Public Works is exaggerating projects estimates. "Contractors are subjected to hard conditions before they are paid," added Otuoma. He explained that a classroom that was constructed at a cost of Kshs1.2 million before he was elected can now be put up at a cost of Kshs600,000.

Muruli claimed that the association takes photographs at the wrong places and indicates that they are the projects being implemented. Muruli cited Agenga Health Centre which is reported to be a ghost project in the NTA report. He claimed the project exists on the ground. A tour by the board and the media established that the health centre was complete and was only awaiting deployment of health workers.

Nabisa however said health centre was not on the ground when they were auditing projects in the constituency. "We dispatched research assistant who found nothing on the ground. If it is there, then it was constructed recently, after the release of our report," said Nabisa.

Magarini residents claim ghost projects funded by CDF

By BEKADZO TONDO

MAGARINI Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee is on the spotlight following revelations that the kitty was being channeled to ghost projects.

Residents say that a close scrutiny of the projects listed as having been implemented through the CDF kitty as at 30th of June 2010 are non-existent on the ground.

Among projects listed as controversial include a dispensary project at Kadzandani in Adu location funded to the tune of Kshs 2.2 million but there is nothing to show on the ground

In Dangamra location, the residents say Kshs 1 million was released from the CDF kitty to fund construction of classrooms and purchase of desks but the project was never implemented.

Data availed to *The Link* indicated that about 77 projects had been initiated in the constituency at a cost of over Kshs237 million since inception of the fund in 2003.

However, an official from the CDF office who declined to be mentioned said the list of projects being circulated in the constituency was fake.

The official instead asked the residents to go to the CDF offices to

get proper records instead of being issued with fake lists of projects purported to have been initiated through funds from area CDF.

But the residents led by the chairman of the Constituency Residents Forum (MCRF) Mr. Julius Ngonyo, said they detected the anomaly after they saw a list from the area CDF detailing projects initiated by the fund since 2003.

The list had been issued to the Institute of Participatory Development (IPD) in Malindi to enable the organization compile monitoring reports on projects implemented through devolved funds and good governance.

The residents now want the area

MP who is also the minister for fisheries development Mr. Amason Kingi to convene a meeting and explain the anomalies which had cost the CDF kitty millions of shillings.

Some of the forum officials from the locations however said such problems could be taking place without the knowledge of the MP and said the residents have the right to inform him if they note such illegalities.

The director of IPD in Malindi Mr Raphael Mzungu said lack of transparency and accountability in the management of the devolved funds was to blame for the loss of millions of taxpayers' money.

Navakholo DO blames crime on hunger

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

CRIME and domestic violence in western province has risen at an alarming rate, a provincial administrator, says.

The Navakholo District Officer (DO) in Kakamega County Mary Kisaka attributes the increased violent crimes and domestic violence to the present hunger in the region.

Kisaka notes with dismay that many families in western province which is endowed with arable land and rain throughout the year, are going to bed hungry.

The severe famine witnessed in the region, she adds, has forced many people to resort to thuggery and other anti-social behavior in order to survive.

She singles out motor bike operators popularly known as boda boda saying that they have been targeted for violent attacks by the culprits in the area.

"We receive reports about violent robbery of motor bikes in the region every other day," the administrator says.

Kisaka at the same time cautions members of the public against obstructing police officers from performing their duties.

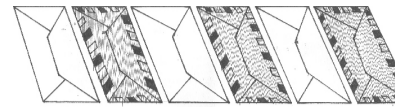
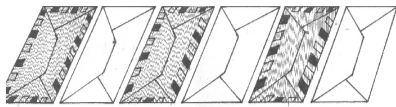
She discloses that recently members of the public exhibited primitive and un-orthodox behavior when they stormed Kharanda police post carrying crude weapons.

According to the provincial administrator, members of the public demanded to have a man suspected to have violently robbed a motor bike and who was being held at the station released to them for beating.

When the police officer refused to succumb to their unwarranted demands they [members of the public] threatened to set ablaze the police post.

The administrator claims that one of the police officers was seriously hurt in the melee, a factor, she adds forced other officers to open fire to scare away the rowdy and un-civilized crowd.

On domestic violence, Kisaka says that cases where men violently attack their wives while demanding for food are in the upsurge.



MPs to pay tax welcome, but they will not take it lying down

THE decision by Kenya Revenue Authority to demand that MPs pay tax and for that matter, backdate it to last July, is, with no doubt, likely to be met with stiff opposition.

During all the time our MPs have been asked to pay taxes, they have defended themselves with flimsy excuses by purporting to meet their constituents' private demands, which they are not obliged to.

They even claim to be the largest taxpayers through handouts, donations and funeral expenses of their constituents. What twaddle!

We are likely to see them increase their monthly income with the exact amount of the tax they are supposed to pay just to "cushion" them from their "unpreparedness".

You cannot claim to pay tax when you determine how much to give. Tax is paid on pre-determined rates, which stretch across all qualified taxpaying citizens regardless of their status in society.

In my humble opinion, if our MPs start to pay tax, they will be more concerned about how this money is used by the Treasury, hence more accountability and maybe, just maybe, corruption will reduce.

Will this time round justice be seen to be served? Give unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar.

Fred Andalya, Mombasa.

* * *

THE latest move by Kenya Revenue Authority to have MP's perks taxed is a move in the right direction and should be accorded the utmost support. There has never been and never will there be, a good reason as to why our legislators do not pay taxes.

Lest we forget, Kenyan legislators rank among the most highly paid in Africa and beyond. Immediately one is elected to Parliament, he or she is entitled to millions of shillings to purchase a house and an expensive car, befitting his status as a Member of Parliament.

Besides the close to a million shillings they take home at the end of the month, they also draw hefty sitting allowances as members of House committees.

The surprising thing is that members of a committee are still entitled to this sitting allowance even when they just make a technical appearance and thereafter vanish into thin air.

As if this is not enough, each time they make foreign junkets, at the taxpayer's expense, they still draw travelling allowances that would leave many steaming in envy.

The tragedy is that this is happening when millions of Kenyans can hardly afford a meal in a day — the very people our legislators purport to represent.

Edwin Mulochi, Nairobi.

Officials should face the law over missing free education funds

CORRUPTION should not go unabated at the Education and Health ministries.

When an honest, law abiding citizen and prompt taxpayer comes across a story line reading "Corrupt officials in Kenya's education and health ministries steal Kshs.4.2 billion within the period of 2005 to 2009," definitely one will left dejected.

Adding salt to injury, Kenya's Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta calls a press briefing to assure Kenyans that suspects have been forwarded to the CID for further investigation, forgetting that the ghosts of Goldenberg, Anglo Leasing and the oil scams are still haunting us.

I would therefore like to echo sentiments of the British High Commissioner, Mr. Rob Macaire, that foreign grants and donations meant for our education programme be channelled through NGOs that will ensure transparency in the disbursements of the funds to schools. It is also unfortunate that the quality of access to education overwhelmingly relies on the health status of a Kenyan.

East Africa's biggest economy loses up to 40 per cent of its GDP to graft annually, according to the country's top graft-buster, the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission.

Uhuru Kenyatta revealed that over Kshs.2.27 billion was lost over a period of four fiscal



Education Minister Prof. Onger (left) and PS Ole Kiayapi in a past function. Kshs.4.6 billion of funds meant for free primary education cannot be accounted for.

years (2005-2009) in the Education ministry, roughly equivalent to 1 per cent of education finances, while Kshs.1.65 billion was embezzled in the Ministry of Health between 2007 and 2008. Surely officials from the mentioned portfolios should take responsibility for putting the lives of Kenyans seeking education on the line.

It is time that sanity was brought to the management of public funds and one of the sure ways is to give KACC the powers to investigate and prosecute corrupt figures.

Shadrack Mbaka, Via e-mail.

Heads must roll

Did the Ministry of Education officials who continue to swindle FPE money watch NTV's county edition from Tana Delta to see the condition under which pupils learn? They should be cursed for denying such children a chance to acquire education.

I know where the children of these callous, corrupt individuals go to school. Heads must roll, prosecutions must follow. We will not dance to this "it wasn't me" chorus. Not when donors are demanding a refund and stopping donations.

Solomon Nderitu, via e-mail

State must intervene in spiralling price of unga

IF the rising of maize flour is not checked, many households would soon find it impossible to put a meal on the table.

After the turn of last year, a 2 kg packet of maize flour was retailing at between Kshs.60 and Kshs.70. Since January, the prices have been increasing at an average of Kshs.10 per month.

Shoppers now have to part with between Kshs.130 to Kshs.150 to get a packet of maize flour, which is Kshs.3 more than the price of the same quantity of wheat flour.

The trend is worrying and the Government needs to step in to cushion consumers before the food situation deteriorates.

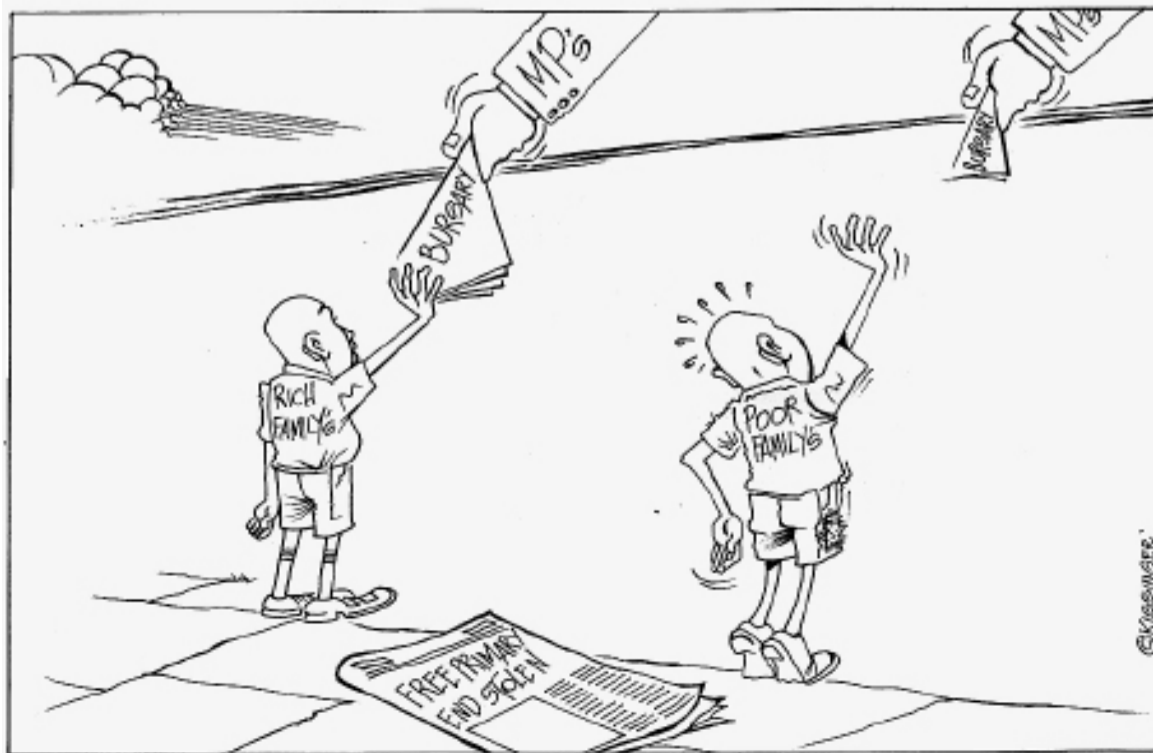
The last time the country experienced severe drought was in 2008, when the Government intervention to make maize flour affordable went down the slippery path of corruption. Brokers pocketed millions of shillings in a scandal that rocked the Ministry of Agriculture and reverberated throughout the Government.

It was prudent for Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta to zero rate duty on maize in the Budget statement on June 8. We hope that the imports would turn the tide on maize flour prices. But this would only happen if maize millers pass on the low import prices to consumers.

In the past, maize millers have acted together on pricing, a situation that negates the principles of a free market.

We urge the Government to initiate interventions that would bring down the price of maize flour to cushion the common mwananchi.

Concerned Kenyan, Nakuru.



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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Mudavadi asked to facilitate audit of funds

By JOEL JUMA

TEN councillors from Butere/Mumias County Council have petitioned chief officers to explain how Kshs 80 million disbursed through the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) over the last two years was spend.

The councillors hailed a move by the Kenya Anti Corruption Commission (KACC) to investigate financial mismanagement at the council.

They said the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Local Government Musalia Mudavadi should facilitate auditing of the council's funds.

"We wrote a letter to the Minister and his Permanent Secretary Karega Mutahi asking them to probe mismanagement of finances at the council because most of the projects have stalled," said councillor Johnson Maloba.

Maloba and councillors Geoffrey Omatera, Swaka Limera, Howard Machanja, Keya Mulaha, Lucas Radoli, Mondekai Nandwa, Ann Wanalo and

Joseph Kubende said it was sad that revenue collected by the council is not being used as per their resolutions.

KACC has already written to Mutahi and Mudavadi asking for the audited reports from the council. The move follows a public outcry over alleged mismanagement of funds at the local authority. KACC Western Regional Coordinator David Too in a letter to Mutahi said audited reports should be availed to enable them to ascertain extent of the loss.

Meanwhile panic has gripped council workers and the chief officers after a

word went round that the anti corruption detectives were to arrive at their premises for auditing purposes. Planning Minister Wycliffe Oparanya, who is the MP for Butere, told the chief officers and the chairman Michael Keya to carry their own cross. Oparanya said he will not protect anybody implicated in graft.

"Let them account for the money instead of hiding themselves under projects funded by Constituency Development Fund," said the Minister.

Some of the projects that have stalled include the construction of two classrooms at Imanga Secondary

School, a water project at Lunza and Sabatia-Shiasa road among others.

Councillors now want the chief officers to account for funds allocated for road maintenance. They noted that the council generates revenue from its grader when it is rented out. The grader generates over Kshs25,000 on a daily basis when hired. Maloba said the grader is always out, working on roads in other areas.

The Council Chairman said chief officers should be held accountable. Keya said he is supporting investigations by KACC.



Mr. Musalia Mudavadi, Deputy PM and Minister for Local Government. Photo/File

Victims of sex abuse in Bungoma to get help

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

A BUNGOMA based human rights lobby group will for the next one year assist sexually abused women and girls. The coordinator of Torture Survivors Organization, Mr. Taiga Wanyanja, told The Link during an interview recently.

Mr. Wanyanja discloses that his organization has gotten some funds from International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) for the purpose.

He, however, declines to disclose how much money IRCT has funded the one-year project. "What I can say for now is that the project is being implemented in Western, Nyanza and North Rift regions," he says.

The rights lobby group's coordinator says that his organization will offer counseling, medical and advocacy support to the victims.

Mr. Wanyanja advises victims not to destroy the evidence but seek medication immediately after being sexually abused. "In case of rape the victims should report to the nearest hospital before drawing our attention to the matter", he says.

The coordinator discloses further that through the project his organization will also assist children born of rape with medication and counseling. He also urges women who were sexually abused during the 2007/2008 chaos to come forward for counseling.

Mr. Wanyanja promises that his organization will treat all rape cases with confidentiality while providing services to the victims.

He points out that the victims from the project areas travelling to the organization's offices in Bungoma town will be facilitated with fare. "As much as we will be moving to different areas to meet the victims we also encourage the victims to come here because we will reimburse their fare," he says.

Local authorities urged to recycling wastes

By BOB OMBATI

LOCAL authorities have been urged to explore possibilities of recycling solid wastes in order to create employment and protect the environment.

Stakeholders attending a UN-habitat sponsored workshop at a Kisii hotel heard that majority of local authorities were overwhelmed in the management of dumpsites and should therefore adopt suitable disposal mechanisms that did not expose people to risky conditions.

The District Public Health officer, Francis Makau told participants drawn from Bondo, Kisii and Homabay towns that Kisii Municipal council generated 52 tons of solid waste daily but lacked a spacious dumping ground.

Makau noted the dumpsite was located near residential houses, a learning institution and a river and therefore stench from the site polluted the air while the waste drained into the river, causing contamination.

"Users of the polluted water especially those downstream risk contracting water borne diseases," asserted Makau. The officer disclosed an analysis carried out within Kisii town in March this year revealed that 96 percent of springs and wells were contaminated and urged the public to boil water or treat them with recommended chemicals for their safety.

He told Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Top Level Capacity (TCB) building workshop that the council also lacked a cemetery, making it dif-

icult for Kisii level five hospital to dispose over 100 unclaimed bodies in its morgue annually.

The DPHO rejected a proposal that the council sets up a crematorium to burn unclaimed bodies, saying that such a move was not in line with the community's cultural values, practices and norms.

The stakeholders proposed that the council sets aside land for cemeteries and dumpsites away from rivers and residential areas to enhance hygiene and effective service delivery.

In recommendations read by area UN-habitat Water, Sanitation and infrastructure Human Settlement Officer, Anne Malebo, councils were challenged to partner with other stakeholders to classify solid wastes and use modern technology to recycle them into useful products for sale to create employment and generate income for councils and households.

The officer said UN-habitat jointly with Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Netherlands Development Organizations had trained groups through a capacity building program sponsored by the Network for Water and Sanitation (NETWAS) International.

Malebo noted that the program initiated in October last year targets 3000 beneficiaries from eleven towns within the three East African countries.

Towns earmarked to benefit include Homabay, Kisii and Bondo in

Kenya, Mutukula, Masaka, Kyotero and Bugembe in Uganda and Muleba, Mutukula, Bunda and Bukoba in Tanzania.

The stakeholders were urged to educate community members on cleaning, protecting and conserving the environment for posterity.

They asked the government to reduce various levies charged on water service providers to lessen the burden of consumers.

Participants urged the government to channel adequate funds to water companies in the 47 counties to improve infrastructure and curb wastage that may arise from burst pipes and vandalism.

They implored Kenya Power and lighting company (KPLC) to introduce special tariffs on water service providers to help reduce production costs. Bondo Town Council Clerk, Chrispine Jamba urged the government to deploy Physical Planners at the County level to help in the planning process.

Kisii Mayor, Samwel Nyangeso said the council required Kshs. 60 million to improve on the drainage system, adding that it was consulting local and international development partners to raise the funds to improve the dysfunctional drainage system.

Nyangeso, accompanied by his deputy, Patrick Siro blamed local leaders for skipping important workshops organized by various development partners, making it difficult for them to understand and implement key policies by the partners.

State moves to curb maternal deaths in marginalized areas

By BEKADZO TONDO

EXPECTANT mothers in marginalized areas of Coast Province will soon be able to access subsidized health care services in government hospitals in a move geared towards addressing the high maternal mortality rates.

The provincial director of health Dr. Anisa Omar says the government has come up with a subsidized mode of payment that will allow pregnant women to purchase vouchers valued at Kshs 200, which they will use to access free health care services from any government health facility.

She spoke at Mihirini health center in Ganze during the district launch of National Child Survival and Development strategy (CSDS). The project dubbed "child health now programme" is a joint initiative by the ministry of health and the world vision. Health facilities in Rabai, Ganze, Kaloleni and Kilifi have been earmarked to benefit from the programme to enhance their maternity services.

Dr. Anisa said the programme will help reduce maternal mortality rates as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as currently a significant number of pregnant women were prone to risks that occur at child birth as they still relied on traditional birth attendants who can hardly handle complications that may arise at delivery.

"About 70 per cent of women are at a high risk of dying at child birth as they still give birth at home where there are no trained personnel who can act to save their lives in case of complications," she said.

Dr Omar said that they were currently working out on modalities to operationalize the process.

"Health facilities will receive Kshs 5000 for each normal delivery and Kshs 20,000 for every delivery done through caesarian method," she said.

Dr. Ann Wamae from the department of family health in the ministry of public health and sanitation said that only 44 per cent of pregnant women in coast province delivered in hospitals.

"Maternal and infant deaths can be averted if deliveries are made by skilled health professionals as most occur within the first 48 hours," she said.

She added that the age and education level of the mothers determined the survival of the child.

"The highest number of deaths has been recorded among mothers who had not completed primary education, those below the age of eighteen years and those older than 35 years," she said

Nyando MP Fred Outa who is a member of the parliamentary committee on health said that government must strive to provide essential services to Kenyans instead of engaging in endless political sideshows.

"We have the best articulated ideas to address the high infant and child mortality rates but they are hardly implemented," Outa said.

Outa said that the Parliamentary Health Committee will soon look into the formation of policy frameworks that would address factors leading to child mortality at the grass root level.

Area Member of Parliament Francis Baya said that most women still relied on traditional birth attendants because they lacked access to health facilities.

"It is hard for a pregnant mother to walk for more than ten kilometers to a health facility particularly when they are in labour," he said.

Battle for control of Local government union rages on

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya Local Government Workers Union (KLGWU) meeting in Mumias ended in disarray after top officials disagreed on the nomination of candidates seeking national seats.

The meeting held at Mumias Sugar Sports Complex in Kakamega County also left the national office split into two camps ahead of next month's national elections.

The split has seen the long serving union's Secretary General Boniface Munyao being opposed by his Deputy Alloys Otiende for the seat.

Munyao and Otiende have formed two parallel factions that have divided members ahead of the June 18 polls. The elections will be held at Bandari College in Mombasa. The leaders failed to agree on the candidates to be nominated for the national polls.

Munyao said the candidates for national seats must be vetted at the regional level for clearance.

The officials claimed that the clause on the nomination was being abused and demanded that delegates should elect the candidates at the regional level. Munyao accused some politicians of taking sides in the union campaigns.

He claimed that Otiende was being sponsored by MPs to fight him. "I have worked hard to ensure local authorities improve the welfare of over 200,000 workers," he added.

Munyao warned the Government against sacking workers during the formation of County Governments.

He said that the council workers should be assured of their jobs when the County Governments take over the management of grassroots affairs in the country.

Munyao's camp has the National Chairman Jacinta Kibet, Treasurer Stephen Kibaya and the National Auditor Peter Kariuki.

The rebel faction led by Otiende has the Nairobi branch chairman David Ngunjiri and Assistant Secretary General Michael Wachira.

Ongoro has declared interest to run for the post of chairmanship during the polls. Munyao, Otiende and the Nairobi Water Company's Kent Mukoya are contesting for the post of Secretary General.

Otiende said the union's constitution should be followed to ensure that candidates seeking positions in the national office are not locked out at the regional level.

Otiende said he will not withdraw from the race despite a request from Munyao.

"Time had come for young people to take the mantle of leadership in the association," said Otiende.

During the Western regional meeting, members elected Joseph Okole and Noel Namanya as members of the national Executive Council while Rispah Makokha from Butere/Mumias County Council was elected as the Women representative.

PC urges police officers to uphold the new law



Bishop in-charge of the disciplined forces Rev Philip Anyolo from Homa Bay Diocese blesses the police uniform during the thanksgiving ceremony by the members of the Police Force. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Police Force has been urged to understand the new constitution and uphold the law while discharging their duties.

Central PC, Mr. Kiplimo Rugut, says that the constitution is clear in regard to the Bill of rights and thus the police should get proper details to be able to protect the rights of members of the public when dealing with them.

"You find that under the new constitution, members of the public have a right to sue officers who fail to discharge their duties accordingly," adds Rugut. The PC says that the police must learn and adopt to the changing times by employing new tactics in maintaining law and order. "The prevailing difficult and hard times experienced by other civil servants and Kenyans may have impacted negatively on the relationship between the police and the public and so police are usually faced with numerous challenges in balancing work and family," adds the PC during a thanksgiving service.

The thanksgiving service which brought together regular police, administration police, prison wardens and KWS wardens among others was conducted by Bishop in-charge of the disciplined forces Rev Philip Anyolo from Homabay diocese who said police face numerous challenges as they do their work of serving Kenyans and most of

the work they do is not publicly recognized. The bishop urged members of the public to view police officers as their brothers and sisters saying this would boost the spirit of community policing.

"The police should not work for the people but with the people since we as Kenyans will need the police in our daily activities," he concluded.

Taifa Sacco fraternity led by Marketing Manager Mr Geoffrey Ritho joined the officers during the service.

The Sacco which donated foodstuffs during the ceremony expressed its commitment in working together with the police force and also helping the less fortunate members in the society.

"We are supporting the good work the police force is doing in keeping peace in the society. We shall also continue helping the less fortunate members in the society," said Ritho.

The PC added, "We should encourage guidance and counseling services amongst our officers who are faced with such difficult times to prevent instances where lives will be lost," Rugut said the thanksgiving service was intended to renew the strength of the officers in their daily endeavors as well as giving them a chance to get closer to their Maker since they are also human beings who require God's guidance.

He urged spouses of police officers to refrain from instances that create pressure on the officers adding such cases may end up in regrets.

Meanwhile Central PC Kiplimo Rugut has lauded the new alcohol law saying it has recorded positive improvement in the region. Rugut said recently in Nyeri town that after the new alcohol law, tremendous change has been registered in development.

He cited Nyandarua County where men are currently reporting to work early unlike before when they were found staggering on the road due to use of the second generation brews.

"I will ensure the law is enforced as we still have room for improvement to ensure the people in the region are busy in their work. This will raise the economy in the area," he said. Rugut said education standards have also started improving after the laws were enforced.

Most of the areas in the region have recorded improvement of education since last year with many students joining universities. At the same time, he urged farmers to start practicing irrigation and planting drought resistant crops due to the looming strike. This, he said will help to enhance food security by next year which will be enough for consumption.

The PC also assured people in the region that he will ensure security is beefed up in Kandara, Kigumo, Gatanaga and Maragwa areas where there have been insecurity cases in the last few months. He lauded the community policing programmes which have helped improve security in the area.

Kilifi settlers want to be issued with title deeds

By BEKADZO TONDO

BENEFICIARIES of settlement schemes in Kilifi want the government to issue them with title deeds to validate the allotment process and ensure that they are not displaced in the event that the land is sold to private developers.

The beneficiaries lament that the ministry of lands and settlement has failed to issue them with the official land ownership documents many years after the adjudication exercise was completed.

Led by the Kibarani ward councilor James Nzaro, the landless people have expressed dismay at delays in the issuance of title deeds saying the current scenario was risky and did not auger well for the future.

Councilor Nzaro wondered how the government plans to tackle the issue of squatters in Bahari constituency if it cannot hasten the process of allocating land on settlement schemes to the targeted people and issue them with title deeds.

"We know of some cases where adjudication work on some settlement schemes in Kilifi was completed about six years ago and there are no objection cases but the ministry of lands has failed to issue them with title deeds," said Nzaro.

The squatters want Kilifi District Commissioner Mr. Katee Mwanza to intervene in the matter and ensure the people get the title deeds.

They said the D.C who is also the chairman of the district land control board has the powers to push the government to ensure the beneficiaries of the scheme get title deeds.

The administrator promised to take up the matter and assured residents that land allocated to them will not be given to other people. "The scheme land was identified as an appropriate site for settling the landless people and there was no way that land can be given to private developers," said Mwanza.

According to the district lands adjudication and settlement officer Mr. Felix Kiteto, there are 17 government established settlement schemes in Bahari district. Mr. Kiteto said adjudication works in most of the schemes has been completed and title deeds issued out.

The officer however said most of the title deeds are lying at the district lands registry uncollected and urged owners to go for them.

Mtepeni ward councilor Boniface Mwingo argued that lands adjudication officers have not been transparent in the allocations of settlement schemes lands.

Mr. Mwingo took issue with the way land was allocated at Gathecha settlement scheme in his ward where he claimed most of the land was given to none squatters.

He feared that it would take the government long time to address the issue of landlessness in Bahari if the lands officers will continue to allocate settlement scheme lands to none squatters'.

Let Kisumu councilors elect their mayor freely

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nities falls short of the growth of labour force; where poverty relegates many people to anti-social problems; and where high dependency levels stifle savings and investment. Deliberate efforts and bold moves must therefore be pursued to wrestle control of the municipal council from powerful economic cartels and their lobbyists through restoration of democratic and accountable leadership.

As a first step towards restoration

of democracy and good governance in Kisumu, councillors must be allowed to freely and democratically choose a mayor to lead the council in the remaining period before the next general elections. Cllr. Sam Okello, the current mayor should appreciate this and, rather than seeking intervention of lobbyist to influence the powers that be, seek support of his councillors. If the councillors decide to vote him out, as is most likely to happen considering the fact that ma-

majority of them are gravitating away from him, their decision should be respected and the newly elected mayor be given the required support to lead his team to sort out the myriad socio-economic problems bedeviling the city.

Section 4(2) of the new Constitution provides that, "The Republic of Kenya shall be a multi-party democratic State founded on the national values and principles of governance referred to in Article 10." When residents

of Kisumu overwhelmingly endorsed the New Constitution, they were conscious of provisions of this section as a definition of a new political system that would end undemocratic tendencies that promote impunity and corruption. Kisumu city councillors must therefore be afforded the statutory right to democratically elect their leader in the forthcoming mayoral elections. It is only then that we can hold them accountable for service delivery.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

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Involve the youth in peacebuilding efforts

THE past 21 months since the inception of the Partnership for Peace, the project has been loaded with activities. During the month of June, the Partnership for Peace project was privileged to hold communication and coordination meetings in three regions of Bondo, Malaba and Eldoret. This was the second meeting in a set of three, whereby the CSOs who have already formed regional networks evaluated the cooperation between the Coordination office, Coordinating partners and amongst themselves. They were also introduced to Early Warning and Early Response templates as well as the CSO reporting templates for monitoring their activities. This was reinforced by their adaptation to better communication and coordination procedures.

The networks shared their experiences of the cross regional exchange visits that took place in May. They discussed the sustainability of networks through possible fundraising mechanisms at their disposal. Every region has charged their task force to help them come up with strategies for future activities. The last of such meeting will take place in September this year.

In July we shall be having two simulation exercises, one set for representatives of our CSO networks. In conjunction with this training, we will also offer tailor-made short trainings

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
JANE MURUTU

on resource mobilization. while the other will be specifically for the expert pool, the management team, representatives from the National Steering Committee and the Provincial Administration in the three regions of Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley who will be trained on a three-day course facilitated by Techchange, the institute for technology and social change. The institute is a renowned international group of passionate people who train on applying technology to help address pressing social issues, such as "Applications of Technology for peace building" and "Technology for Crisis Response" The purpose of the training is to simulate the cooperation within the network in cases of imminent tensions of violence.

This article will not be complete without emphasizing the role of the youth in peace building work. This is informed by the fact that when we had the cross regional exchange visits in May, we interacted a lot with village peace committees' right through the district level. One outstanding phenomenon that kept on resurfacing is the under representation of the youth in the peace initiatives. Is it a case of neglecting them or are they reluctant

to be part of the ongoing voluntary peace building mechanisms? Your guess is as good as mine. It's not surprising that if they are not engaged they are likely to become agents of political riots better still, executors of violence. It is a fact that there are several obstacles that hinder youth engagement in conflict resolution programs, specifically, the politicization of peace processes and patriarchal system that restricts young women's participation. Engaging the youth in peace building efforts serves to address their feelings of fear, isolation, hopelessness and stigmatization, and in turn, contributes to the overall security of the community. To effectively empower the youth, promote their competencies and resilience and positively affect their social roles, there is need for peace building not only at multiple levels of society including the family, school and community. However, the place of individual responsibility in maintaining a peaceful co-existence cannot be overemphasized. Unfortunately, stereotyping, fear, adult unwillingness to share power and short-term funding hinder this type of comprehensive programming. Youths should become an integral part of local and national governance in order to strengthen their commitment to and understanding of the issues of peace building and conflict resolution.

Social media are some of the best ways to engage young people worldwide in peace building and conflict

resolution. The internet has been one of the main catalysts for the development of a youth platform among Cameroonians and Egypt for example. The fact that young people do not want to be perceived as a target group for whom employment must be found, but they want to be accepted as partners for development is quite clear.

Kenya goes to elections again in about a year's time but there are concerns that not enough is being done to avoid a repeat of 2007, where is the place of the youths in the discourse that are taking place in this country? Which are the voices that are the loudest? My hope is that people will no longer be fooled by political leaders who use violence to mask their incompetence.

It's high time that we all are cognizant of the fact that each person has a legitimate stake and equal status in the peace building process. Let's have the insight to see the heart of the problem and articulate a brilliant solution more so among the youth.

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

Peace efforts in Kuria bearing fruits

BY **CHACHA CHACHA**

ALTHOUGH peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Kuria has been long, slippery and expensive, efforts to build peace in the region is beginning to bear some fruits.

As a community, the Kuria have weathered the storm and emerged more united, more resolved than ever before to never

again fall victims to the schemes of the infamous cattle raiders, who cunningly planted seeds of discord and mistrust between communities.

Kuria West District has been particularly peaceful amidst turmoil that befell Kenya during the post election violence of 2007/2008. Although the Kuria Constituency experienced clashes and intensive fighting in 2009, this was confined to Kuria East, with Kuria West play-

ing the role of peace mediator.

Hence claims that 50 lives had been lost and that tension is very high in Isebania (Bugumbe/Bukira), Nyamaharaga, Kehancha, Ngocho-ni, Karamu, among others are far-fetched to say the list.

That is why a former nominated councilor Beatrice Nyamani from around Karamu frowns on hearing

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Group calls on state to account for Sabaots killed by the army

BY LUKE KAPCHANGA

A LOBBY group in Mt. Elgon District wants the government compelled to account for hundreds of innocent people killed during a military operation to clump down on members of the outlawed Sabaot Land Defence Forces (SLDF) in 2008.

TRIAL, which is a Swiss organization against impunity, has submitted 20 individual cases to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UNWGEID). In addition to the individual cases, TRIAL has also submitted to the UNWGEID, a 35-page report entitled "general allegation" about the existing obstacles in Kenya towards the implementation of 1992 UN Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

The cases compiled with support from the Western Kenyan Human Rights Watch largely implicate the military which was allegedly involved in the operation conducted in the area in March 2008.

Under the UNWGEID, individuals are entitled to report cases of enforced disappearances after which they are submitted to respective governments, thus acting as a channel of communication between the families of the victims and the government concerned with a view to ensuring that individual cases are investigated and the whereabouts of the disappeared persons clarified. The lobby group wants the government compelled to undertake thorough investigations into the alleged disappearance of hundreds of innocent people and action taken against those responsible.

The military operation was meant to flush out members of the SLDF who were against



Sabaot Land Defence Forces: Lobby wants the government compelled to account for hundreds of innocent people killed during a military operation.

what they considered as unfair land allocation by the government. The criminal gang had been operating in Mt Elgon since 2006 and had amassed massive control over the region, forcibly ejecting perceived enemies and committing numerous atrocities while doing so.

The government acted by launching a massive joint police-military operation dubbed Okoa Maisha (Save Lives) in 2008.

During the operation men and boys were indiscriminately detained and tortured to death as the security agents demanded to know SLDF members. Despite numerous reports by NGOs, the government has denied

accusations of human rights violations.

But three years down the line, hundreds of men and boys remain unaccounted for. No investigations into these crimes have been initiated and families of the victims have been kept in the dark as they wallow in anguish, frustration, distress and uncertainty.

TRIAL has however analysed existing legal framework on enforced disappearances as well as the administrative and judicial initiatives undertaken by Kenya and their compatibility with the 1992 Declaration.

TRIAL suggests that UNWGEID visits Kenya to push for justice, truth and integral reparation of affected families.

Peace efforts in Kuria bearing fruits

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that there was tension and conflict in her ward and home ground. "Not any that I can remember of," she concludes. The only time she remembers of some issue was quite a while ago, when there was some dispute as to where the Isebania Boys School lies, and to this she affirms that the issue was amicably resolved without any conflict.

Councilor Murimi of Gitonganya ward exclaims in surprise and disgust at the allegations of insecurity and high tension in the above mentioned areas.

Murimi, whose ward borders Bukira to the east, and Migori to the north, says: "Chief Ndege and Clr Bonyo of Migori are close friends and associates of this region and I have not heard of any tension report from them either," he concludes.

Kuria has made tremendous strides in peacebuilding. Through the ever effective leadership of the two area DCs, Mr. Mutindika and Mr. Mugwe of East and West Kuria respectively, the hard nut of insecurity has been broken and the seeds of peace have found their ways far and wide, sprouting into flowers to not only pacify but also beautify the one time Middle East-like region.

Both of them, privileged to have served for many years in the volatile North Eastern Kenya, have harnessed their experience to not only restore peace but also put in place sustainable mechanism for peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

Besides, the USAID (United State Agency for International Development), through the peace caravan initiative, has kept the rhythm of peace visible and loud enough for all the Kurias to enjoy.

The Kuria has cast their peace net deep into the lake and it is their sincere hope that peace would soon prevail in the entire region, including Kuria East where more peace efforts still need to be directed.

The writer is the director of PRCT-Kuria and Member of EXPERT POOL, western region.

TJRC warns against threatening witnesses

BY TITUS MAERO

THE Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) has warned that it would take legal action against individuals who are out to threaten witnesses who appear before it to give evidence of past abuses in the country.

During its first sitting in Kakamega recently, the Session Chair Commissioner Major General (RTD) Ahmed Farah said persons appearing before the commission to give their submissions are well protected under the law and urged them to report any incident of intimidation to the police.

"If you are threatened from any quarter please let us know through our hot line telephone number or report to the nearest police station for assistance to enable the law to take its course," he told the witnesses who gave oral submission at the Kakamega Social Hall. He said the work of the commission is well defined adding that it is one

of the agenda four commissions driving the transitional justice agenda which is a process and mechanism both judicial and non-judicial associated with a society's attempts to address past abuses in order to ensure accountability is observed.

The first person in the dock was the Kakamega Primary School Head Mr. David Ikuunza, who was first sworn in before he started giving his testimony of how part of the Kakamega Primary School's land is said to have been allegedly grabbed by a private developer in the year 2004.

Ikuunza told the commission comprising of Commissioners Prof. Ronald Slye from United States of America (USA), Ambassador Berhanu Dinka (Ethopia) and assisted by the TJRC CEO Patricia Nyaudi, that he received threats whenever he sought justice on the grabbed school's land.

He gave a horrifying account of how the students of the public mixed school were repulsed, whenever they could go and attempt to bring down the fence which had

been put around part of the schools land alleged to have been grabbed.

Pressed further by Commissioner Farah to state why he could not seek the assistance of the police, Ikuunza said he reported the matter to the security personnel but still the matter could not be resolved.

"Did you try to seek police protection against what was happening at the school? And what was the outcome?" Farah asked the Head Master, who said he had on several occasion tried to seek police intervention in vain. The TJRC is bestowed with the responsibility of hearing public and private submissions from victims, perpetrators, where experts also give testimony relating to gross violation of human rights.

In its final report, the TJRC would document the commission's work relating to the three aspects of historical record of gross human rights violations and injustices through reparations and prosecutions and how to prevent future violations in various ways.



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Borabu, Sotik residents use sports to promote peace

By **BOB OMBATI**

AS the clock ticks towards the 2012 General Elections, residents along Borabu and Sotik districts common border are not leaving anything to chance owing to the ugly incidents that characterized the area during the last elections.

Communities residing along the common border have lined up various peace and sporting activities to enhance peaceful-co-existence among the residents.

Esise Ward councilor, Thomas Mariga, revealed that the two communities have resolved to build a memorial church at Kibuse hot spot area along the border where a man was beheaded during the post poll chaos, adding that faithfuls from both sides will share it to enhance peace.

Mariga said that the two communities were currently sharing markets while their children are attending cross border schools.

"Ribaita Primary school which was burnt during the skirmishes, has since been rehabilitated and benefits Kalenjin and Gusii pupils," he added.

He said his Ward was adversely affected during the chaos, adding residents from both sides share vital information which has helped to reduce incidences of cattle theft and other criminal activities.

"The youths, who are mostly misused by rogue politicians as whipping boys during campaigns and electioneering period have assured us that they will not be misused anymore," said Mariga, adding majority have embarked on income generating activities for economic empowerment and self reliance.

Borabu District Commissioner, Mohamed Noor Hassan, says community leaders from both sides are holding monthly peace meetings to address issues as they crop up with a view to resolving conflicts to promote peace.

The DC says an Administration Police camp has been set up along the common border to beef up security. Further anti stock theft security officers have been deployed at Memisi and General Service Unit (GSU) camps at Chepilat to address cattle rustling and periodic flare ups along the common border.

He says cases of cattle rustling along Borabu-Sotik border have been reduced by 95 percent following the revival of community policing. The DC said that the Ministry of Justice and National Cohesion had organized peace meetings in the district that brought together rep-

resentatives from warring communities around Mt Elgon, Transmara and Sotik, where they shared their experiences.

The Provincial administrator noted that cultural events including beauty contests, are periodically held targeting youths from Borabu and Sotik in a bid to enhance cohesion among members from the two communities.

"We also organize sporting activities like football for the youths from both communities. During such events, peace messages and positive values are inculcated among them. That has greatly helped in promoting unity and integration," observed Hassan.

He appealed to the Ministry of Justice and National Cohesion to sponsor community leaders and youths to visit countries that have experienced turmoil in the past, and cited South Africa which was under the yoke of apartheid for over three hundred years before gaining independence.

"The DC said such visits will help them learn and share the same with affected communities to hasten the process of healing, reconciliation and forgiveness.

Dennis Rosana, a resident of Chepilat market which was flattened during the chaos, says that normalcy has returned and the destroyed shops had been jointly constructed by members from Kalenjin and Kisii communities to show solidarity and commitment to enhancing peaceful coexistence.



Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo addressing a consultative meeting on the Policy on National Cohesion and Integration.

Fears of violence as general elections draw closer

By **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

AS the country forges ahead towards the next General Elections, there are fears that skirmishes witnessed during the last general election may recur in some areas.

According to peace crusaders in western province, signs of violence witnessed during the last electioneering period are re-emerging, especially in cosmopolitan areas and major towns in the region.

The revelations were made recently in Malaba town in Busia County during a two day communication and coordination workshop for western region peace network facilitated by the Partnership for Peace Project.

"This time the violence may erupt not as a result of stolen election but due to negative ethnicity and prejudice being advanced by selfish politicians," says Mr. Cleophas Okisai who is Executive Director of Teso Peace and Human Rights De-

velopment Initiative (TEPEHURDI).

He censured a meeting held in Teso District and chaired by Prime Minister Raila Odinga which he said appeared more inflammatory than conciliatory

"Those of you who attended the PM's recent rally in Amagoro can agree with me that most speakers tried to incite locals against the PM's perceived opponents," he said.

Mr. Okisai disclosed that one of the speakers urged the residents to block Saboti MP Eugen Wamalwa and his followers from the area.

The participants said the utterances were reckless and should not be tolerated as they are likely to incite violence during and after the next general election.

The participants further resolved to invite legislators to open peace meetings or workshops that are held in their respective areas in future.

The peace makers added that organiz-

ers of the meetings or workshops should compel the MPs to promote peace and harmonious coexistence among communities. This, they said would make the MPs to denounce tribal cocoons and see other people as worthy regardless of their party affiliation and tribe.

The participants were also issued with monitoring tool and rural set up questionnaires developed by the partnership for peace project for use to monitor activities and achievements that will contribute to peaceful co-existence in their areas.

Ms. Jane Murutu, the partnership for peace project co-manager reminded the participants that promotion of peace in communities was their role and the communities themselves but not the Government.

She urged the communities to resolve conflicts through dialogue and at the same time challenged them to reject tribal and divisive leaders.



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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

EISA holds mediation training in Kisumu



By **JOSEPH OWUONDO**

IN mid June, Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa (EISA) held three-day mediation training in Great Lakes Hotel, Kisumu. The training, which brought together 40 mediators from Western Province, North Rift and Nyanza Regions, covered electoral laws and regulations in relation to new political dispensation. The event concentrated on conflict factors, evaluation, life cycle, analysis, peace-building interventions, mediation, and implementation processes. By the end of the training, it was apparent that the participants had learnt more than they had expected.

Boundary dispute

Kisumu County also experienced a sad part in June, when long time clan boundaries turned into violent conflicts, which led to shedding of blood and propagation of animosity. Namthoi Land boundary dispute has historical perspectives that have seen tribesmen from East and Central Kolwa rise against each other. Kisumu East District Peace Committee, the DO and DC had engaged the feuding parties in peace meeting last October. The resolutions from the October's meeting mandated area Chiefs to map and establish the boundary, which was done. There are however questions since the Chiefs are believed to have had special interests in the dispute. The situation has been complicated further from the fact that the report that had been released last year has not been shared with the Namthoi residents. Kisumu East District Peace Committee through the Chairman Mr. Audi Ogada, have called for urgent assistance from the government and stakeholders for complete resolution of the Namthoi matter.

CIAG-Kenya to develop Peace and Security Information System

On a more positive note, CIAG – Kenya's two interns, Joseph and

Charles Otunga have developed a Peace and Security Information System Concept, a pilot project that will map out conflicts and report on security and peace situation. The project anticipates grassroots community members' engagement and will focus on hotspots, peace and security situation analysis, information sharing and infusion of technology in peace work. The duo is mobilizing resources for the project. Hopefully the system will be up in the next few months.

The writer is an intern with CIAG-Kenya.



Police officers in patrol during post-election violence in 2007.

Photo/File



"Celebrating diversity in unity"

KISUMU PEACE FESTIVAL

will take place from

4-6 August 2011, in Kisumu.



"Celebrating diversity in unity"

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Raila Amolo Odinga, will officially open the event at the Jomo Kenyatta Grounds, Kisumu, on August 4, 2011.

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By KAVYU-KURA

Early marriages to blame for hunger in Mwingi

THE current food deficiency and hopelessness afflicting hunger stricken families in Mwingi Central has been attributed to retrogressive cultural practices.

The District Officer for Mwingi Central, Sarah Gichamba, recently lamented that unplanned parenthood and early marriages had fueled squalor resulting to the current food distress among the residents.

Ms. Gichamba said there were notable cases of child neglect. Hard pressed parents, she added, have run away from homes as pangs of hunger bite, leaving children under the care of hopeless and aging grandparents. She said children from such families had flooded streets of Mwingi town as urchins.

"A snap survey has shown that most families that are hard hit by the current famine and food scarcity belong to young couples who mindlessly get into marital unions and sire many children in utter disregard on their future," said Ms. Gichamba.

The DO who was fielding questions from the media after she rescued six badly malnourished children from Ndiani village in Ithumbi sub location, said the six children were supplied with Unmix floor that is usually enriched with food supplements and thus their health had greatly improved.

"You have to understand that the situation has been aggravated by the fact that the men do not allow their spouses to engage in any income generating activities to supplement family income and ward off poverty," said DO Gichamba.

She said it was ironical that families headed by single but mature mothers were not as hard hit by poverty and hunger as those of teenage couples as the former were more aggressive and engaged in income generating activities. "The old fashioned traditional beliefs that wives have to remain at home and bring forth many children as they



An elderly widow **Munanie Katwai** (right) explains her family's predicament in the face of hunger to DO **Sarah Gichamba** (left). Her jobless son **Mwaniki** and his suckling wife **Muthina** are in the background. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

await to be provided for by their husbands are retrogressive in these harsh economic times and make an already bad situation worse," said the DO.

She however disclosed that the government donated famine relief food would be used to ensure that all vulnerable families receive adequate food to

ward off cases of starvation.

Earlier, the six starving Mwingi children were taken to Mwingi District Hospital after Ms. Gichamba stormed their parent's homes following reports they had gone without proper meals for weeks.

The DO dashed to Ndiani village

and rounded up the weak and emaciated children before rushing them to hospital.

She had been instructed by DC Peter Kinuthia who had received reports the children were on their death beds as they had nothing to eat and resorted to scouring bushes for wild fruit.

Manga DC assures residents on food security

By BOB OMBATI

MANGA District Commissioner, Onesmus Kyatha has issued a three week ultimatum to bar operators and chang'aa brewers and sellers in the area to acquire licenses or face the law.

The DC says most establishments in the area were operating illegally and therefore must rush to beat the three-week deadline by NACADA, failure to which they will be prosecuted.

Kyatha warned that security officers will arrest unlicensed bar operators and chang'aa brewers and sellers once the deadline expires and challenged the latter to obtain both brewing selling licences to avoid harassment.

He at the same time assured residents of their security and urged them to cooperate with security agents through the community policing programme in order to expose criminals in their midst.

The Provincial administrator warned bodaboda operators at Nyabioto junction to keep off the junction to avoid causing accidents or being crashed by speeding motorists, adding that some youths whiled time away at the junction to rob accident victims under the guise of helping them.

Meanwhile, Civic leaders, Nyakundi Kingoina (Kamera ward), Peter Maroro (Manga) and Nyamira county council vice chairmen have warned road contractors against doing shoddy work, stressing that they will be held accountable.

Kitutu Masaba Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) chairman, Timothy Bosire, urged members of the public to monitor the public funded projects in the area to ensure they were of quality and completed within the set time frame to benefit from them.

Citing Riamaranga-Sengera and Motemomwamu-Manga road, Bosire blamed contractors for doing shoddy work, adding that they should be forced to reconstruct the road properly or they face legal action.

Responding, the DC put contractors who do shoddy work on notice, saying they will be held responsible and accountable for the poor work.

He lamented that local community members preferred contractors from the area who implemented government funded projects shoddily, making it difficult for the provincial administration to intervene at the initial stages to tame the rogue contractors.

Kyatha asked area residents to monitor public projects being implemented in their areas to ensure that they were implemented properly since they were funded from their tax.

Orengo speaks out on public lands

By JOEL JUMA

THE culture of dishing out public land by local authorities will soon come to an end, Cabinet minister James Orengo has promised.

Orengo and Mumias MP Ben Washiali noted that local authorities have to a large extent contributed to land conflicts by allocating plots irregularly. He explained that the National Land Commission has formulated some of the laws that will stop irregular allocations.

The Lands minister said towns are being flooded with squatters because

of irregular allocation of land by local authorities and other land grabbers.

He explained that the land policy will resolve problems facing Kenyans after its legislation.

He noted that the creation of County Governments by the new Constitution will see land matters being resolved at the local level.

Orengo told Kenyans to report cases of land injustices to the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) so that the body can compile a report that will shape the future of the country.

The Minister was speaking at Shi-

toto Girls in Mumias District during a funds drive in aid of the institution.

Washiali said cases of land injustices should be investigated afresh. He noted that Mumias has numerous squatters after they were evicted by the Government to pave way for the construction of Mumias Sugar Company.

He said a group calling itself Abahuyi Self Help Group is suffering, as they were not compensated adequately when being evicted in Mumias town. "Some members of Abahuyi are scattered in Shianda, Matungu and Lurambi," he added.

Washiali said the commission should get a solution to the squatter problem in his constituency.

The Mumias MP said it is unfair for post-election violence victims to be compensated whereas people who donated land for development of industries are ignored.

Orengo also said the Constitution guarantees fair allocation of resources adding that the Revenue Allocation Commission will ensure that all regions get their shares.

He said that cases of discrimination will come to an end with the implementation of the new Constitution.

Oyaya calls for ethical society

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Ministry of Education quality assurance and standards director, Mr Enos Oyaya, has emphasized the need to maintain and sustain ethics to ensure a better society. Oyaya attributed deficiency of ethics in human beings as the root cause of the evils bedeviling the society and more so in learning institutions.

Speaking recently at St Paul's Seminary in Nyeri County during the Arch Diocese of Nyeri Education Day whose theme was "Education for Holistic and Sustainable Human Development", Oyaya said ethics was crucial in the

country's development in all spheres.

He urged teachers to play an important role in changing societal ethics noting that ethical values were lacking in the education assessment system as teachers emphasized more on academics rather than behaviour.

He called on them to keep abreast with the changing times due to technological advancement to ensure they are ahead of their clients. The director, however, noted that the new Constitution had stressed more on ethics to ensure the society is transformed for the better.

He told the gathering that suspension of wayward students from school is

not a solution adding that better measures should be put in place to transform them. "Prepare the youth for the future and not prepare future for the youth," he added.

The educationist urged all stakeholders to play their roles effectively and ensure students acquired high quality academic standards and not be complacent with better grades.

He told parents to take more responsibility on their children lamenting that they have abandoned their responsibilities to teachers. He added "It is parents who are compelling teachers to take their children for tuition classes so that

they can be away from home."

The director acknowledged the 60,000 teacher shortage in the country adding that the government was seriously addressing the problem not to compromise education quality standards.

Oyaya urged the media to be in the forefront of fighting societal evils citing drug abuse among others.

Nyeri Catholic Archbishop Peter Kairo who was present during the occasion said the church will continue working with the government in the provision of education to the youth.

The Catholic Church has for long time provided education to enhance the country's development.

Government told to abolish music festivals or fund them

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government has been urged to fund primary and secondary music festivals.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) said it is contemplating withdrawing teachers from the competitions due to lack of money from the Government and parents.

"The Government should abolish the festivals if it does not have money to finance the activities. Students and teachers should not be subjected to unnecessary suffering," said the union's Kakamega County Secretary John Wesonga.

The Kakamega Central District Education Officer (DEO) Mabale Indiatzi confirmed that there are no adequate funds to cater for the welfare of students.

Indiatzi said it was shocking that parents have not remitted Kshs57 approved by the District Education Board (DEB) to finance such competitions.

He explained that he was having a shortage of over Kshs 400,000 to enable him run the music competitions.

He explained that transportation and feeding of students was increasingly becoming impossible as prices of food stuffs have gone up.

"The head-teachers have not remitted the money because most parents have refused to pay after the Government declared education free and compulsory," said Indiatzi who was speaking at Matende secondary school during the local music competitions.

He explained that there was need for the MPs in the region to mobilise resources to have the students be assisted financially.

Wesonga however said the Government was to blame for the confusion. The Knut National Second Vice Chairman Wycliffe Omucheyi explained that the Government should introduce an education levy to take care of such activities.

Omucheyi said in the same way the Government had established fuel levy, it should do the same to the education sector so that Kenyans can contribute to the kitty.

Omucheyi explained that sporting activities were developing talents in schools and should be financed adequately by the Government and all stakeholders.

The Kenya Special Schools Head-teachers Association national chairman Arthur Injenga said the creation of a levy should be given priority by the Government.

Injenga said the many disabled children were still not in school due to lack of fees. He said that special schools require more facilities compared to other institutions in the country.

Mwingi officers caught on camera receiving bribes

By KAVYU-KURA

POLICE in Mwingi are expected to file charges against traffic police officers captured on video receiving bribes.

Kenya Anti-corruption Commission (KACC) sleuths recorded the traffic officers whom they found collecting bribes from Matatu and bus operators along Mwingi-Garissa road.

"After we secretly recorded police officers receiving bribes from Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operators in Mwingi town, we made copies of the CD and handed it over Acting OCPD Simon Birir for action," a KACC officer told The Link on phone.

The KACC investigator said they acted swiftly following incessant complaints of harassment of the Matatu and bus operators by police officers as they demanded bribes and expected Birir to take either administrative action or charge them in court.

"If Mwingi police boss takes long to act, we are going to make a follow up and take action ourselves," the KACC officer who did not wish to be named said.

However, Mr. Birir said he would not comment on the recording adding that he knew nothing about it since it had not been handed over to him.



Matatu and buses at the Mwingi town bus stage. The police allegedly extort bribes from them daily.
Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Recently Public Service transporters plying the Mwingi-Kyuso-Usueni road complained due to the bad state of the road and demands for high bribes by police.

"Since for obvious reasons our vehicles cannot be in the best of shape due to the bad state of road, police have resorted to collecting bribes of

Kshs 300 from any 14 seater-matatu, Kshs. 500 from mini buses plying the route and Kshs. 1,000 for a big bus," said one operator who gave his name as Musesi.

Meanwhile a senior official in the Mandera Registrar of persons office has been arrested by KACC officials for soliciting and receiving a Kshs.

30,000 bribe. As we went to press he was due to appear before the Embu Anti Corruption Court.

The top official was arrested shortly after he received the bribe from a resident who was seeking a national Identity card but was released on Kshs. 50,000 cash bail pending appearance in court.

Kenyans in the diaspora to field presidential candidate

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

KENYANS in the Diaspora will field their own presidential candidate come the next general elections, it has been revealed.

This is because there over three million Kenyans who have attained the age of voting but living outside the country and have never participated in the general elections.

Speaking at a Nyeri Hotel during a sensitization workshop attended by youth, women, grassroot leaders, civil society groups and opinion leaders from the six constituencies in the Nyeri County, the co-convenor of New Vision Kenya Movement Dr. Shem Ochuodho said the movement encourages leaders of integrity and openness.

The workshop which had

over 60 participants was organized by the New Vision Kenya Movement, the Kenya Diaspora Alliance and the Nyeri Social Forum.

Nyeri Social Forum coordinator Mr David Ngige said the forum is supporting servant leadership and vision-driven leaders who aim to economically empower their constituents to earn a sustainable liveli-

hood.

Among the key note speakers were former President of the Kenya Community Abroad (KCA) Mr Gichane Muraguri, President of Diaspora Movement of Kenya based in Salt Lake City Mr Robinson Gichuhi, Kenya Dairy Board MD Mr Machira Gichohi and Mr Omieri Angima from Centre for Multiparty Democracy.

Hassan calls on state to compensate Mau evictees

By JOEL JUMA

THE head of the Mau Secretariat Mr. Noor Hassan has asked the government to release Kshs3 billion to compensate families who were evicted from the Mau Forest in Rift Valley.

He said implementation of the resettlement programme stalled partly due to lack of money to compensate the families that were evicted from the forest. The Government deployed over 190 forest rangers to get the families out of the land.

"The matter should not be politicised if we have to move forward," said Hassan. He explained that politicians are to blame for the slow pace of restoring the Mau Forest.

He noted that the secretariat has so far received Kshs50 million from development partners to conserve the water tower.

Hassan disclosed that the restoration process has seen over 24,000 hectares of land being recovered since the exercise kicked off four year ago.

"We need to stand firm on the compensation for the 7,500 families," said Hassan.

Hassan was speaking at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology in Kakamega when he addressed participants attending the International Conference on Tropical Forest Resources.

The function was also addressed by the University Vice Chancellor in Charge of Finance and Administration Sibililke Makhanu and the

Chairperson of Journalism and Mass Communication Lydia Anyonje.

Hassan said plans are underway to allocate 50,000 hectares of land to development partners to assist in reclamation.

He said Defence Ministry and that of Environment are working out with plans to plant trees in the area.

Noor said there was need for the Government to channel the funds to women and youths programmes to bamboo farming.

"Bamboo has many products that can spur the economy of the country compared to giving out small loans to the youths and women," said Hassan. He explained that energy production is one of the areas that bamboo can be used to

reduce forest destruction by charcoal burners. He explained that countries in Asia have invested in bamboo products to improve their economy.

He said furniture products from bamboo are also marketable in Kenya and other foreign countries.

The Chairman of the University Council Alan Simu and Makhanu said Kakamega Forest need to be protected.

He said the forest plays a key role in research and provision of medicinal plants.

Makhanu and Simu said wild animals require protection adding that some animals in Kakamega Forest are rare.

"The forest is a big resource to the residents of Kakamega County and beyond," said Makhanu.

Education ministry did not return funds to treasury — Official

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Government has refuted claims that the Ministry of Education was among government departments that had returned funds to the treasurer.

The Director of Policy, Partnership and East Africa Community Affairs in the Ministry of Education, Mr. Kiragu Magochi says the claims are baseless.

He says the Ministry was currently agitating for additional funds for the hiring of additional teachers to take care of the staff shortage.

He says since the introduction of the Free Primary Education, the number of pupils had grown to an extent where the current number of teachers is unable to handle the population.

Mr. Magochi spoke in Embu recently where he was the chief guest during the Embu West District Education Day held at Kangaru Girls High School.

He says the Ministry has established a task force that is moving round the country to review the curriculum to conform to the provisions of the new constitution.

The official points out that the findings of the task force will be used to fill the gaps identified in the counties across the country.

He says in Embu County, there are more boys enrolled in schools but drop out of school along the way.

Magochi says the Government was also working with other East African partner states in the setting up of standards that would enhance the interaction of graduates from the region. He notes that with the integration process, opportunities for employment are likely to expand.

The official says the Board of Governors should only approve projects that the stakeholders had identified as priority for institutions.

He says the Ministry was aware of some committees that had approved projects that serve individual interests.

The official says projects will be audited regularly to help identify officials who are likely to have engaged in corrupt deals for possible prosecution.

Secretaries' association Central branch launched

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

KENYA National Secretaries Association (KENASA) Central Kenya branch has been launched in Nyeri County.

The association was launched amid concerns that some secretaries in government offices had forgotten their ethics, leading to leakage of classified information.

"Recent incidents where confidential government documents had found their way into the media and political circles had left many wondering if secretaries had lost their sense of confidentiality and ethics which were the hallmark of their profession," lamented Central PC Mr Kiplimo Rugut.

In a speech read on his behalf by his deputy Mr Francis Sila, the PC however encouraged the secretaries in the public service to go for further training to improve on their skills saying the government has opened the way to the higher echelons for any civil servant who pursued further studies.

The members of the association who are secretaries in the various Government offices first participated in a procession within Nyeri town before the official launch at Information hall.

The Deputy PC Sila flagged off the procession which was led by the

AP police band.

"The scheme of service for secretarial staff was under review to improve their working terms and to bring it in line with the requirements of the new constitution," said the Head of Government Secretarial Services in the department of Personnel Management Mrs Hilda Ojwang.

She reminded the secretaries that the profession was changing fast due to technological changes and urged the workers to embrace training to enable them to adapt to the new working environment.

KENASA National Chair Mrs Rachel Kamatu said besides enforcing ethical work practices, her organization will network with other secretarial bodies in the country and internationally to equip the secretaries with skills to deal with the many problems they face from their bosses, colleagues and customers.

She added that the organization was started to give secretarial staff one voice and added that the growth of the organization has been rapid with membership growing to 3,500 in the two years it has been in existence.

The Central Kenya branch is the second to be launched outside Nairobi after Kakamega.

Meanwhile Maendeleo ya Wanaume movement has bitterly protested over the mysterious release of

Catholic Priest Fr Sesana Kizito vowing they will fight until justice is done.

The National Chairman Mr Nderitu Njoka who spoke in Nyeri town recently has therefore demanded that the Government immediately re-arrests the priest and ensure that he is charged in a court of law.

The movement protested at the recent release of the renowned priest who had been arrested on allegations of sodomising his 26 year-old male secretary in Riruta area of Dagoretti saying the move had put the capacity of police in handling sexual molestation cases to question.

"We demand with immediate effect this priest be charged in court for the offence and the others he committed before," said Nderitu.

He said members of the Maendeleo ya Wanaume movement will soon protest to the Ministry of Gender and Social Services on what they termed as neglect of the rights of men.

"The Ministry has totally turned a blind eye to the rights of men and over concentrated on championing for the rights of women, men no more have any rights in this country. Nobody complains when men are oppressed," added Nderitu.

The outspoken chairman expressed concern over the rising cases of abuse on men in the country accusing the government of negligence.



Central Deputy PC, Mr Francis Sila, flags off the procession of the KENASA members who are secretaries of the various Government offices. This was at PC's offices in Nyeri town. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Otuoma tours Yatta NYS field Unit

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr Paul Otuoma, has asked the National Youth Service to play a critical role in ensuring national food security.

Dr Otuoma has urged the NYS to impart life skills among the youth who are out of school.

Dr Otuoma who toured the NYS Yatta field Unit, said the Service had over 20,000 staff who could be used to produce sufficient amounts of food.

He said the greenhouse technology, small scale drip irrigation, fish culture and mini layers cube were some form of the cheap agricultural technology that could be easily adopted by farmers to boost food production in any part of Kenya.

"Kenya can save billions of shillings used to import maize and other foodstuff if food production technology available with NYS institutions cascaded to farmers, especially the unemployed youth," said the minister.

Dr Otuoma, who was accompanied by Permanent Secretary James Waweru and the Director General of NYS, Mr. Japheth Mwanja lauded the high level of discipline and teaching standards in NYS colleges.

He urged graduands to make positive impact in their respective rural homes.

The PS, Mr. James Waweru, said the Government was working on the scheme of service for NYS staff who were left out when other arms of the disciplined forces received a pay hike.

NYS Director, Mr. Japheth Mwanja, said the service had recovered over 1200 acres of land that had been acquired irregularly.

He said NYS was committed to doubling annual revenue from the current Kshs100 million to Kshs250 million in the next few years.

Nyeri leaders clash over taxi operations in town

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI Mayor Mr Joseph Thairu recently clashed publicly with Central ward councilor Mr Paul Kanyari over taxi operators within Nyeri town.

The mayor accused the councilor who is also the chairman of Town Planning Committee of allowing the operators to contravene traffic regulations.

The over 40 operators had stormed Town Hall seeking explanations from the mayor after what they termed as harassment by the police and the municipal askaris

but things only generated to heated arguments between the two.

Efforts for the Nyeri Central Business District Mr Jackson Kanyingi to stop the two fell on deaf ears as they continued exchanging words as things got out of hand.

"Kanyari you are not part of the problem and instead you should help us to find a solution," shouted the mayor who is also the Majengo ward councilor as he pushed aside the councilor who looked ready for a fight.

But Kanyari declared that he is on the side of taxi men who

have been harassed by the police and council askaris despite having valid licenses.

"I'm on their side and that will remain so until this harassment is stopped. I'm very furious on this matter," replied the councilor.

Waving twigs, the operators accused the council of colluding with traffic police officers to harass them by arresting them and impounding their vehicles on allegations of flouting Michuki rules.

"They normally come with a list the vehicles they want impounded and yet we know very well some council askaris have

their own vehicles which are not touched," shouted one taxi man.

They had stormed the town hall seeking a lasting solution.

The mayor told them to wait for few hours as he seeks solutions over the matter.

The move came shortly after the police impounded over 20 vehicles operating as taxis within the town for allegedly flouting the 'Michuki' rules.

Majority of the vehicles had no continuous 'yellow line' and insurance covers allowing them to carry the capacity passengers.

The operation carried out was

headed by Nyeri Traffic Police Boss Mrs Grace Mbugua and other senior traffic officers.

"The police have been harassing us and we are now wondering how we shall operate in Nyeri County. We need to hold a meeting between the police and taxi operators to chat the way forward," a taxi operator said.

Despite their complaints, Nyeri Police boss Mr Kirunya Limbitu said that the crackdown will continue.

The taxi operators were given two months to meet all the rules needed by the Government.

What the elderly in western take home

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

ABOUT 750 elderly residents in Western Kenya take Kshs.1.12 million every month through the Cash Transfer Programme.

The Western Provincial Director of Gender and Social Development, Mr. Ben Makotsi, says each beneficiary receives Kshs.1,500 a month to sustain their livelihoods. He said the fund targets the elderly and vulnerable residents suffering from HIV/Aids.

Mr. Makotsi says the Ministry of Gender has identified old and poor people aged 65 years and above to benefit from the subsidy.

He asked them to utilize the cash wisely to enhance their nutrition levels and guard against diseases caused by malnutrition.

Mr. Makotsi urged the elderly to seek guidance from the Department of Social Development that works on guidelines set by the ministry.

He said the ministry works in liaison with the Help Age International to share their skills with members of the public.

Meanwhile, the Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) has urged Sugar millers in Western Province to invest in projects that can boost income for farmers. The Board's Branch Manager, Mr. Laban Mulehi, said only Mumias Sugar Company has invested in power generation, ethanol production and mineral water projects among the four factories in Western Province.

Taveta market, bus park under construction

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE construction of a Kshs.428 million bus park and wholesale market in Taveta town on the Kenya-Tanzania border is underway. The multimillion projects being built on a 200-acre plot, have capacity to accommodate 70 buses and over 200 stalls near the Tanzania border town of Holili.

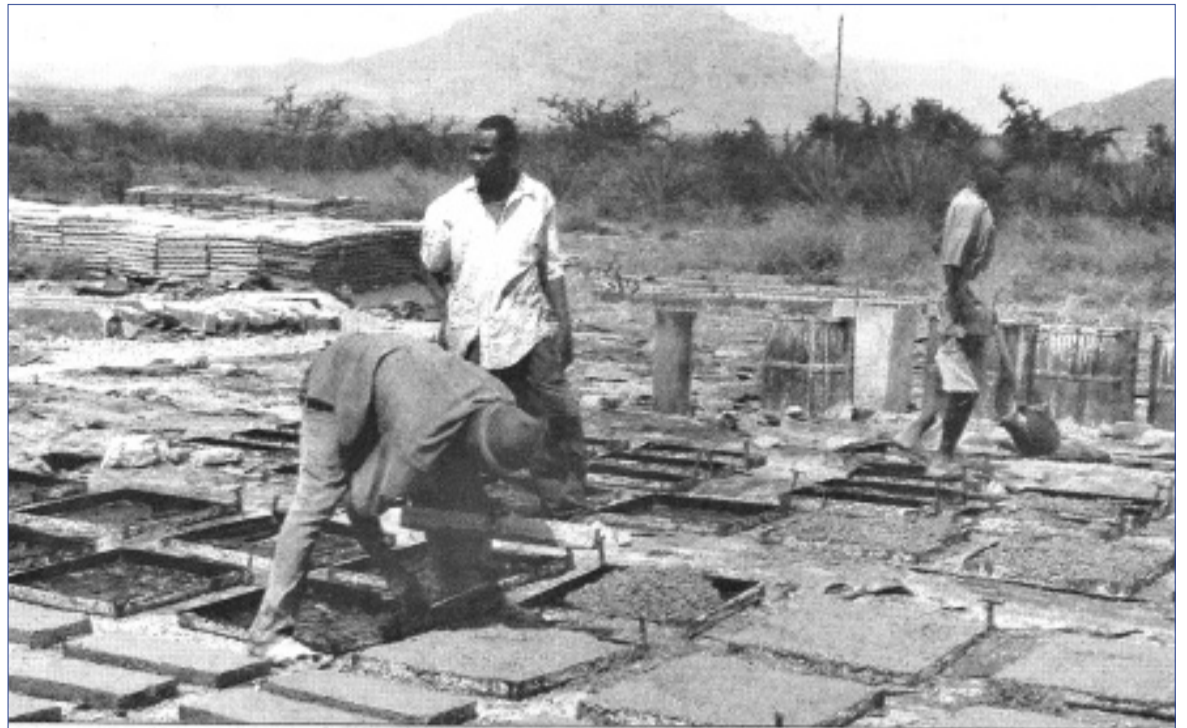
According to Mr. Benson Mwambaria who is an internal auditor at the council, the twin park and market project has been designed to spur cross-border trade in a 2,000 acre piece of land bought from former Taveta MP Basil Criticos.

Mr. Mwambaria said other upcoming landmarks include a storey building that is set to house Equity Bank. Others include a new immigration and border control office, a youth empowerment centre and many upscale housing estates.

Mr. Mwambaria, says the new market and bus park are funded by the Ministry of Local Government.

The official says that the park and the market provide an ideal site for farmers in the rich Kilimanjaro agricultural region in Tanzania and the horticultural rich Taveta district to sell millions of tones of farm produce like maize, bananas, onions, oranges and other horticultural produce.

He said that currently the scenario was pathetic as traders have been forced to operate in an open air market which becomes unbearable during the rainy season



Construction work in progress at the Taveta border town.

and lacked basic amenities such as toilets. "We intend to open up the border area and push development beyond the poorly planned town centre, to help alleviate suffering among traders who deal in merchandise in the open air," said Mwambaria.

The Town Clerk, Mr. Rashid Shariff, said the town planning blueprint was a replica of the model adopted in the second largest city of Namibia and seeks to transform the unplanned border town into a unique facility.

Mr. Shariff said for the first

time since independence, property owners in the thriving border town will be given security of tenure through a new physical planning format designed to rid the town of squatters.

"We are going to expend Kshs.40 million to upgrade all building plans in this town in order to do away with haphazardly planned structures that are an eyesore," said the Town Clerk.

A foreman, Mr. John Fundi, said the construction of the market that measures 200 by 75 meters started on February this year. It will have a loading bay for lorries, four wholesale and six retail shops, revenue offices, access collection office and three toilets.

The foreman said the 115 by 75 meters pack that will handle 70 buses and will be handed over to the council in August this year.

Task force wants body formed to implement Sexual offences act

By THE CORRESPONDENT

THE task force for the implementation of sexual offences act, together with the relevant actors like the civil society are now embarking on initiatives to oversee the establishment of permanent authority to administer the act.

The task force is also exploring modalities to establish a one stop centre that will foster multi sectoral collaboration to streamline delivery of services for the survivors of sexual violence in the health, justice, legal, social and forensic management.

According to the Attorney General Amos Wako, the taskforce is also auditing and reviewing laws, regulations, practices and custom relations to sexual offences, to harmonise them with the new constitution, for effective administration.

Currently, the taskforce is developing the protection of the welfare of victims of offences bill under article 50 to ensure that the rights of survivors is realized as envisaged in the bill of rights/continued public awareness and outreach in partnership with civil society to educate communities on the rights provided in the act and the obligations therein.

"For effective implementation of the sexual offences act, there must be collaboration across the government sectors with civil society organizations. This is the only way to make the progressive provision of the sexual offences act a reality to all Kenyans. The government is fully committed to improving prevention and the response to sexual offences through effective administration and the implementation of the act," says the Attorney-General.

The taskforce has also developed the action plan on the stop centre to foster multisectoral collaboration, revise the prosecutor's manual in sexual violence and develop the investigation manual which includes training of model charges under the sexual act, done by the police department.

"Today, a gender desk has been created at the police stations across the country together with a training manual in conjunction with Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA). There is also incorporation of the act provision in the induction curriculum of Chiefs, Assistant chiefs by the ministry of provincial administration and internal security. Already there are national guidelines for

the management of the sexual offences and the post rape cases by the ministry of gender and social services. The Teachers service commission has a circular relating to sexual abuse in schools and the Ministry of Education guidelines to address cases of sexual violence in schools," says Wako.

However, the Attorney-General recognizes that the implementation of the act has been marked with numerous challenges which include cultural attitude and practices that condone sexual violence hence, hindering reporting of the violence in some areas, and ultimately operation of the act.

According to AG Wako, "The trend clearly show that with each passing year, there are more recorded incidents of sexual and gender based crime. Since sexual violence is a private crime, there must be significant reporting. The emerging image after making provision for under-reporting is that sexual violence is big and ever increasing problem for the country".

Wako says that for a large number of women, sexual and gender based violence is not a casual encounter from which they walk away to resume their lives. It is a life changing experience and has a shattering effect.

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How agro-inputs project transforms lives in Kakamega

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

AT the end of this month, Emily Wanjala of Sienga village in Kakamega Central District hopes, to re-stock her granary.

The mother of four is excited as she points to her one-acre farm by the road leading to Navakholo trading centre where other farmers are converging to receive a share of certified fertilizer. The manure is provided through a programme run by the Ministry of Agriculture that seeks to achieve food security.

Ms. Wanjala is among 1,500 beneficiaries of inputs grants from the National Accelerated Agricultural Inputs Access Programme (NAAIAP) in Kakamega Central District this financial year.

She is expected to contribute a portion of her harvest towards the country's food basket.

In a region that has been perennially dogged by challenges of poor techniques that have for years led to dismal performance, the pride of most small-holder farmers is evident as they narrate how NAAIAP has transformed their investment.

"Before the programme started, farmers were getting an average of eight bags per acre which have more than doubled," says Oscar Oyalo, the chairman of stakeholders association in Navakholo.

Mr. Asman Mulata of Musaga village says Agriculture Assistant Minister Gideon Ndambuki toured the area recently to assess the programme's performance.

"I got seeds and fertilizer in 2008 and harvested 30 bags part of which I sold and bought two dairy cows that are now producing milk which I sell," he says.

Milimani Cereal Bank Group chairman, Mr. Morris Ukhevi Kasni-

sio, whose group was toured by Mr. Ndambuki says the programme had enabled women in the group to own food kiosks besides empowering them to plant in the next season.

The concept of cereal banking has allowed farmers to market their produce after storing part of it at designated facilities such as the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) depots.

Standards set for the quality of maize to be planted are strictly adhered to while prices are determined agreement with members.

Among the harvest procedures used by farmers include ensuring reduced soiling of cobs, drying the crop to reduce contamination and sorting it out before storage.

NAAIAP's core objective is to improve access and affordability of key inputs to smallholder farmers who are the main producers.

The region received 34,500 input

grants worth Kshs.225.25 million in the current financial year. A total of 1,500 such grants worth Kshs.9.7 million were distributed to farmers. Majority of the growers were required to pick 10 kilogrammes of maize and 50 kg of fertilizer for top dressing. On harvest, they are required to maintain a portion of the produce in banks for use in the following season.

The District Agricultural Officer, Ms. Lynnet Kibisu, says the initiative had helped deal with problems of input access due to the distance farmers cover in search of inputs, and post-harvest storage challenges.

The agro-dealers have been picked to operate in Kakamega town.

Ms. Kibisu told The Link a storage facility will be set up with funds sourced from the Economic Stimulus Package. The centre will help farmers store surplus produce.

Isiolo town set to become a resort city

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Government has initiated development projects under Vision 2030 to transform Isiolo town into a resort city.

Isiolo District Development Officer, Mr. Joseph Nganga, said feasibility studies on the development of the town were completed last year by the Government and Isiolo County Council is expected to provide land for the envisaged projects.

Mr. Nganga said tourism will be a catalyst to development of the Resort City that will house, among other facilities, hotels, casinos, tourism facilities, an industrial resort, supermarkets and residential centres.

Speaking at his office, the District Development Officer lauded the Government and development partners for selecting Isiolo among areas likely to spearhead projects under Vision 2030 development blueprint.

One of the Vision 2030 flagship projects that is being undertaken in the urban centre is the construction of Isiolo International Airport which is at an advanced stage. Mr. Nganga says the Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) will serve tourists for the benefit of investors.

Isiolo International Airport is expected to open up Northern Kenya and link the country with neighbours, especially to the North through air services and businesses.

He says the tarmacking of Isiolo-Marsabit-Moyale road that is in progress will open up the area for a diverse range of investment projects.

Mr. Nganga says tarmacking of the road had reached Merille River bridge and described the workmanship of the Chinese construction firm has been exemplary.

He says most of the development projects, including the on-going construction of an abattoir in Isiolo town, were tailored for the improvement of the urban and rural services for residents.

The District Development Officer says: "After completion of the abattoir in which construction work is on course, the facility will operate like the Kenya Meat Commission and serve local and export markets."

He says the Vision 2030 development projects that have been planned for Isiolo Resort City that is expected to be achieved if the programmes are implemented on schedule.

Speaking to The Link at Isiolo abattoir site, area District Veterinary Officer, Dr. Gerald Kimathi, said the project would cost Kshs.153 million. He said Kshs.53 million has been utilized in construction work.

Dr. Kimathi said fencing of the abattoir site had been completed along with animal yards and slaughterhouses.

He said a borehole, water reservoir and water tank that will facilitate water supply to the abattoir and workers have been put in place. He said additional infrastructure will be set up soon at a cost of Kshs.100 million.

The abattoir that is jointly funded by the Government and African Development Bank has a capacity to slaughter 340 animals on a daily basis, including cattle, goats, sheep and camels.

The District Livestock Production Officer, Mr. Abdullahi Wario, says the Government has funded Kshs.40 million feedlots for fattening of animals before they are taken to slaughterhouses.

The project involves facilitating the fattening of 12,000 head of cattle each year besides acting as a holding ground for the animals before they are slaughtered.

Construction of model Mwingi market starts

By KAVYU-KURA

PLANS are underway to put up a Kshs.65.2 million model market at Nguni trading centre in Mwingi County. Already the contractor, Diwafa investment limited, has moved to the site and workers are busy putting up a perimeter fence after leveling the ground.

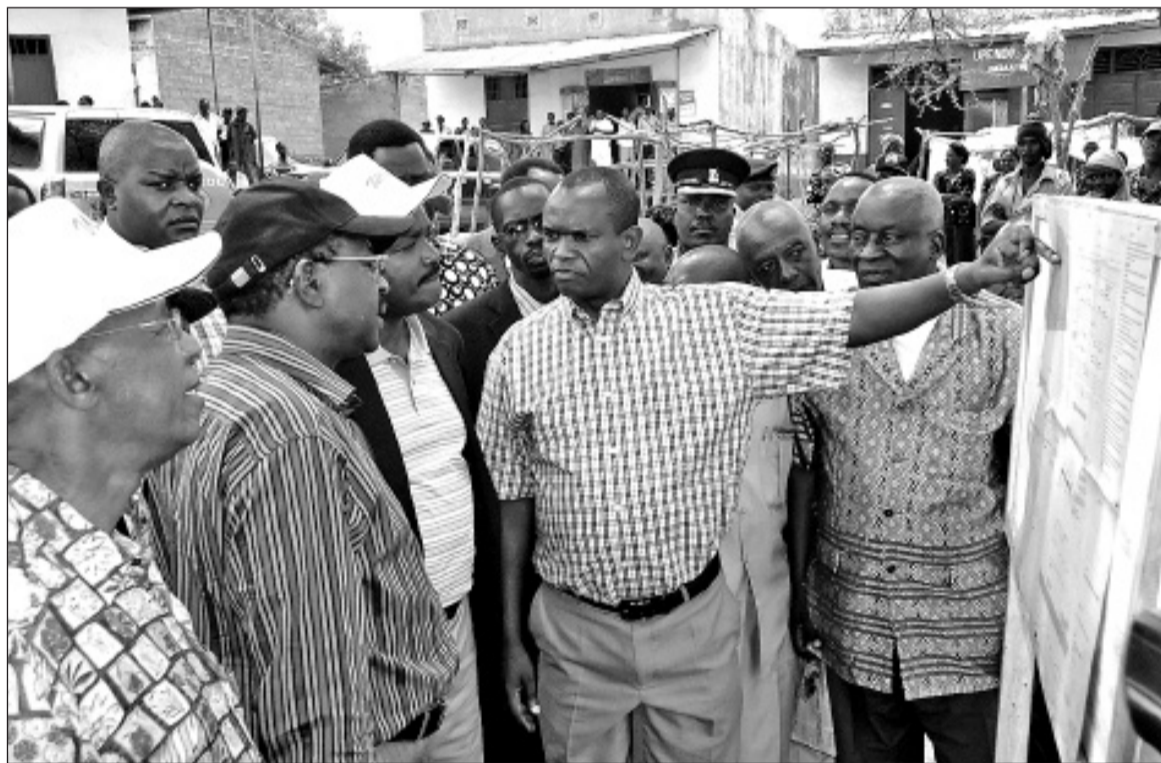
The contractor moved in days after Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka visited the area in the company of Justice and Constitutional Affairs minister Mutula Kilonzo and announced that the construction work would commence immediately.

During his visit Kalonzo was taken through the architectural drawing of the model market by Gabriel Jabongo of the Mankan consulting Engineers. He said the market will create self employment for the locals hence help fight poverty.

According to the Director of markets development in the ministry of local government, Patrick Mutua Nzoka, the market that lies along the Garissa-Mwingi-Nairobi highway, is ideal to pilot the 24-hour economy that the government intends to introduce.

He said that two giant sheds will be put up to not only protect traders from the scorching sun and but enhance economic activity and provide jobs to up to 1000 people.

A brief on the project indicated



VP Kalonzo Musyoka, director Mutua Nzoka and Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo being shown the market drawing by consultant Jabongo. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

that the construction work would last 12 months and would involve the setting up of two giant sheds, street lighting, septic tank, toilets, garbage cubicle and a Kshs 3.5 million borehole and water tank.

He said the model market was a

government initiative to spur economic growth in the area and allow enterprising people to operate locally and increase their incomes as a way of keeping poverty at bay.

Elijah Mutambuki, the clerk to the Mwingi County council said the

construction of the market by the central government was commendable as it will not only create jobs for at least additional five revenue collectors but boost the revenue the local authority collects from Nguni by 40 percent.

Police reforms gather steam

By PETER MUTUKU

THE process of transforming the country's security services has taken a new dimension following the launch of a comprehensive police reform programme.

About Kshs78 billion has been earmarked for the programme, which is expected to be implemented in the next three years in accordance with the recommendations by the National Task Force on Police Reforms chaired by Kenya Airways CEO Titus Naikuni.

The programme entails the intro-

duction of enhanced training, better remuneration and improved housing for officers.

According to the report, the reforms are to be implemented in phases with the first phase of a three year police review programme slated to kick off in the new financial year.

The reform programme has received a major boost with Swedish Deputy Head of Mission Mr Bjorn Haggmark stating that his government would continue to support the police reform agenda in areas of security, human rights protection and justice.

Mr Haggmark reiterated that Swe-

den's cooperation with Kenya in areas of police reforms since 2004 aim at enhancing training programmes with a special focus on community policing and the shaping of police training curricula.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) through its representative Loide Lungameni has also pledged to continue supporting the government in transforming the police service. Currently UNODC is providing technical support to the Government.

"We have no doubt the police have set the wheel in motion but if the Ken-

yan people continue to pay bribes, the reforms will remain a dream," she said.

The new police curriculum has received applause from the UN Women's Gender and Governance Advisor Ms Stella Maranga who said it is a step in the right direction towards breaking gender parity in the police force.

The police Reform Programme, whose mandate is to transform the police into an effective, efficient and trusted security agency encompasses development partners, the private sector and the public.

Sugar industry on edge over Comesa rule

By BOSCO MAGARE

THE country's local sugar industry needs to raise the bar and improve its business practices to survive anticipated challenge from regional sugar producers upon expiry of the Comesa moratorium as other stakeholders warn of a looming threat.

Chemelil Sugar Company Managing Director (MD) Eng. Edward Achieng Musebe urges particularly local public sugar companies to up their game in order to be able to compete effectively with regional sugar producers, once the Comesa moratorium is lifted in February 2012.

"Expiry of the Comesa moratorium is not quite a threat to the local sugar industry. What will happen is that once the moratorium is lifted, the rules and economics of demand and supply will come to play, which will inevitably force local producers to up their game," Musebe says.

In an interview with The Link, in his office at Chemelil Sugar Company, Musebe says once local sugar companies improve their business practices they will make it difficult for regional Comesa and other international sugar producers to compete and sustain their product in the local market.

"Once local sugar millers improve their business practices and efficiency, this will make the cost of importing sugar from the Comesa market expensive for regional producers or those involved in the trade," Musebe says.

Nzoia Sugar Company Chairman Eng. Julius Nyarotho is equally optimistic the local sugar industry can overcome the expected Comesa onslaught by internalizing our sugar production process. "By internalizing our sugar I mean, we need to do what Mumias Sugar Company has done by fortifying their sugar with vitamins 'A' and making it more specific. Thus any other sugar that is imported into the local market will find it difficult to penetrate" Nyarotho says.

SUCAM gives conditions for sale of factories

By BOSCO MAGARE

A NUMBER of local stakeholder conditions need to be fulfilled for the government's planned privatization programme for local public sugar companies to succeed as earmarked millers await parliament's approval of programme.

Sugar Campaign for Change (SUCAM) national co-ordinator Michael Arum strongly feels certain conditions must be fulfilled for the local privatization programme to sail smoothly.

These include need for government to clarify the sugarcane farmers expected allocation on shares, once local state owned sugar factories are set on the privatization path, he says.

"The government needs to clarify whether sugarcane farmers will be allocated 51 per cent sharehold-



Ready sugar for consumption. Photo/File

But Sugar Campaign for Change (SUCAM) national co-ordinator Michael Arum differs with the optimistic stand taken by Chemelil Sugar Company Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Eng. Musebe and Nzoia Sugar Company Chairman Eng. Nyarotho.

Arum views the lifting of the Comesa moratorium by end of February 2012 as a threat to the local sugar industry given that the sub-sector is not organized.

He argues that when the Comesa Secretariat located in Lusaka, Zambia, extended a moratorium to Kenya it was attached with certain conditions which the government is yet to fulfill.

Arum says Comesa Secretariat conditions included the need for the government to ensure privatization of state owned sugar factories is done within a stipulated time-frame.

"That is the government should have identified potential investors in the sub-sector, such that by 2009 all state owned sugar companies should have been sold off to private investors," Arum says.

Arum says the other Comesa conditions are that the government should have ensured local

public owned sugar factories have adopted the sucrose-based cane payment system to make local firms competitive instead of the current system pegged on payments pegged on cane weight.

"Currently only a pilot sucrose payment scheme exists at Nzoia Sugar Company, which is funded by Kenya Sugar Board (KSB)" Arum says.

The SUCAM national co-ordinator points out that the other Comesa Secretariat conditions include need for local sugar firms to start planting early maturing cane varieties.

"The government by now should have funded the multiplication of research on new cane seed varieties. But technology adoption at multiplication stage has been low in the industry," Arum laments.

Other Comesa conditions given to the government entail need to improve road infrastructure through the Kenya Sugar Board's (KSB's) Sugar Development Fund (SDF).

"Improved road infrastructure is intended to reduce cost of transportation to factories incurred by farmers," he says.

At the same time, Arum recalls the government was advised to ensure the diversification programme for state owned sugar factories to enable them venture into projects such as ethanol and paper production including electricity generation are in place.

"It was also proposed that the government should set up a co-ordinating committee comprising representatives from Kenya Sugar Board (KSB), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Trade, to monitor the implementation of the Comesa Secretariat recommendations," Arum says.

The Link independently has established that such a co-ordinating committee already exists and is currently chaired by Assistant Director in the Ministry of Agriculture Clement Muyesu.

The committee's representation is drawn from different government departments and among its members includes Ministry's Deputy Director of Industries Gregory Munyao.

Members of the committee recently visited state owned sugar firms like Chemelil Sugar Company, Sony Sugar Company,

Muhoroni Sugar Company including stalled Miwani and Nzoia Sugar Company to collect views of management officials on their preparedness for lifting of the Comesa moratorium and challenges faced.

Arum says the Comesa Secretariat was of the view that by meeting these conditions the Kenya government would have ensured state owned local sugar factories are ready for regional and international competition by 2012 when the moratorium is lifted.

"However, these reforms have not been achieved as directed by the Comesa Secretariat sitting in Lusaka, Zambia," Arum laments.

To prove his contention, Arum points out for example that privatization which was one of the Comesa Secretariat conditions is half-way done.

"The privatization programme for local public sugar companies has received Cabinet approval but is awaiting parliament to debate the same and approve. Thus when we say the local industry is under impending Comesa threat, our fears are based on these unfulfilled conditions," Arum says.

Arum argues that even if the privatization Bill is approved by parliament, there is still need for sufficient time to identify potential investors in line with the government's new Procurement Act.

"In the meantime local sugarcane farmers and other stakeholders will continue to suffer under the prevailing circumstances," Arum warns.

Arum says related to the expected Comesa effect on the local sugar industry is the anticipated impact of European Union (EU) Sugar Reforms.

"The EU Sugar Reforms imply that we stand as a local sugar industry the risk of imported sugar from Comesa regional producers like Mauritius and Malawi, which have currently a huge EU premium quota that attracts lucrative prices for them shifting their cheap imports to Kenya," Arum says.

State set to waive debts owed by sugar firms

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE government plans to waive debts owed by sugar factories in a bid to facilitate their privatization process.

Assistant minister for Agriculture Mr. Gideon Ndambuki says that cancellation of the debts and subsequent privatization of the sugar factories would greatly benefit sugarcane farmers in Western region. Mr. Ndambuki challenged the sugar factories to take advantage of debt relieves and diversify their products in order to increase efficiency and income.

"The sugar industry should now venture into new products

such as molasses and energy so as to have sound financial base," the minister said. He asked sugarcane farmers in Western region to prepare themselves and buy shares in the sugar companies once they are put on offer.

However, the assistant minister cautioned the farmers against selling their shares to other people who are not sugarcane farmers.

"You will risk losing ownership of the factories to foreigners if you sell your shares," Ndambuki said.

The assistant minister disclosed that the government has acquired 82 million US dollars to be loaned to groups of farmers throughout the country.

Mr. Ndambuki consequently challenged sugarcane farmers to organize themselves in groups and access the funds so as to improve their cane husbandry. He did not however disclose the donor of the funds and whether it is a loan or a grant to the Kenya government.

The assistant minister who was accompanied by provincial director of agriculture (PDA) western, Mr. John Cheruyoit and other senior officers from the ministry headquarters at the same time urged farmers to plant certified seeds.

Ndambuki took issue with the youth saying that the rapidly diminishing size of land should not be an excuse for them to become idle.

Italy funds local youth polytechnics

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE government with support from Italy has embarked on an ambitious programme aimed at revamping technical training institutions in the country.

Already Kshs.320 million has been channeled towards 12 youth polytechnics in the country to improve infra-structural facilities in the programme dubbed the Kenya Italy Debt For Development (KIDDP).

Assistant Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Ms. Wavinya Ndeti says that 18 projects have been funded under the programme which is currently ongoing in Nairobi, Kilifi, Tharaka ,Suba, Nyandarua and West Pokot Districts.

She made the remarks in a speech read on her behalf by the director of training in her ministry during the commissioning of training workshops at Vitengeni youth polytechnic in Ganze district

Mr. Jackson Kago, who is the country representative in the Kenya-Italy Debt for development program said that the funds were spent in the rehabilitation of targeted youth polytechnics which have been equipped with the necessary training materials.

Ganze Mp Francis Baya who was present when the three-twin workshop blocks were commissioned, thanked the Italian government for the noble gesture.

Baya who is an Assistant Minister for immigration and registration of persons said the government was committed to reforming the operations of the youth polytechnics in the country.

He said the youth polytechnics will provide learning opportunities to students who fail to join secondary schools or universities to acquire skills on different sectors.



Youth artisans at work. Italy to support local youth polytechnics.

The minister said water was a big challenge in the area and vowed to use funds from the area CDF to drill a borehole near the youth polytechnic.

Meanwhile, the MP wants the ministry of education to probe claims that the area District Education Officer (DEO) had fraudulently obtained Kshs 100,000 from local schools.

Baya who is also an Assistant Minister for Immigration alleged that the DEO Mr Charles Nyakundi had collected Kshs4,000 each from local schools to purportedly facilitate their registration

but never used the money for the intended work.

The DEO has however denied the claims that he had defrauded the schools insisting that the amount in question was actually remitted to the ministry of education to facilitate the registration of the said schools.

The education officer said he had documentary evidence to prove that the collected funds were used as registration fee.

But the area MP said he had established from the Ministry of Education

headquarters in Nairobi that the registration fee currently stands at Kshs1,000 and not Kshs 4,000 as indicated by the DEO.

"I personally went to the ministry of education offices in Nairobi to find out how much was required to have a school registered and I was shocked to find out that only Kshs 1,000 was required and not Kshs4,000 as claimed by Mr. Nyakundi," said Baya.

He said the officer has to be investigated and appropriate action taken against him for abusing his office.

Wakenya Pamoja Sacco pays its members dividends

By BOB OMBATI

WAKENYA Pamoja savings and Credit Cooperative (Sacco) society has paid out dividends valued at Kshs. 6 million to its members to help alleviate poverty, the society's chairman has revealed.

Zedekiah Agata said shareholders will be paid Kshs. 6.6 million dividends at the rate of 6 percent this year up from Kshs. 5 million last year which was paid at the rate of 5 percent.

Agata told members during an Annual General Meeting (AGM) that the Sacco made a surplus of Kshs17 million up from Kshs13 million last year, attributing it to the introduction of various products and quality services to members.

He said the Society has acquired a service charter and a license from the Sacco Society Regulatory Authority (SASRA). "I assure members that their funds are safe. We are operating professionally and we want them to come for loans for self development," Agata told the delegates.

He said the Sacco has opened a branch in Rachuonyo district and was opening another in Migori district to increase its membership, share capital and offer unique products and services to its members to reduce poverty.

The Society's Chief Executive Officer, Gideon Oyuma said the Society was partnering with local and international development partners to roll out a school fees programme to help bright

students from needy families.

Cooperative Development and Marketing Permanent Secretary (PS), Seno Nyakenyanya who was the chief Guest urged cooperative societies to include women in their leadership positions to help empower them and enhance their participation in the cooperative movement.

The PS lamented that women accounted for a large percentage of membership in Cooperatives but have been left out in the cooperative movement due to lack of support mechanisms.

During the meeting, the PS launched the Sacco's service charter, a three-year strategic plan and Sacco Society Regulatory Authority license (SASRA)

He challenged the management of

100,000 member Sacco to diversify its activities and empower youths with entrepreneurial skills to start businesses and boost their living standards.

Nyakenyanya urged the Societies to help youths form Saccos to boost their savings and investments and address the high levels of unemployment.

"We should create room for the youth in our respective Saccos to enable them tap from the numerous benefits in the cooperative movement," said the PS.

The PS disclosed that the Sacco movement in Kenya had mobilized savings to the tune of Kshs. 230 billion with an asset base of Kshs 250 billion, stressing the Sacco movement had a potential in raising the savings as envisaged in the much hyped vision 2030.

Building of Bungoma tannery starts

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

THE Government plans to put up medium sized tanneries in the country at a cost of Kshs 100million.

One of the tannery is to be constructed in Bungoma town at a cost of Kshs.30million.

The new plan was unveiled by the permanent secretary in the ministry of livestock development Kenneth Lusaka during the ground breaking ceremony.

"The livestock sector is a vibrant industry practiced by majority of Kenyans, as it provides a range of activities for men, women and youths towards economic development", said Mr. Lusaka.

According to the government es-

timates, 1,000 jobs have been created directly and another 6,000 indirectly since the introduction of export duty.

The jobs created are in a variety of technical and skilled positions such as selectors of material, quality control, tanners and mechanics and unskilled, sometimes casual labourers.

Mr. Lusaka said that the leather sector generates an estimated Kshs.195million every month which translates to Kshs.2.34billion annually.

He added that the government through various initiatives intends to boost productivity in the leather sub-sector under the Economic Stimulus Programme.

The PS stated that the ESP targets sectors that have a strong multiplier

effect on economic growth and strategically designed to address existing regional development imbalances.

He revealed that the leather industry contribution to the GDP currently stands at about 4 percent with their earnings growing steadily over the years.

"Through skins and hides processing initiatives, the government seeks to improve living standards for rural communities by empowering mostly women to participate in income generation," he adds.

These tanneries will be run and managed by community groups or rural based registered enterprises that intend to upgrade their operations from raw stock leather processing.

The upgrading should be both in processing and production of leather goods in an effort for them to participate in value addition process.

The PS announced that the ministry plans to train two youths from every tannery to equip them with adequate knowledge and skills of running the established tanneries.

These trained youths will in turn train the work force appointed to run the tanneries. The reason for picking up Bungoma as the location for the tannery was based on its capacity to have skins and hides.

Bungoma County is said to produce about 24,000 skins and 28,000 hides annually, which is able to sustain the operation of the tannery.

EU funds youth vocational training

By BEKADZO TONDO

European Union has donated Kshs300 million to support five vocational training institutions in the country.

The EU head of operations in Kenya Mr Bernard Rey said the grant will go a long way in empowering the youth to enable them compete effectively in the job market.

Mr. Rey said the increasing number of unemployed youth in the country had slowed down economic growth and urged the government to put measures in place and address the problem.

"The increasing number of unskilled youth in this country is posing a big challenge to the economy and I call upon the government to embrace measures that will help correct the situation before things become worse," said Mr. Rey

Mr. Rey was speaking during the official opening of TEWA training center in Kikambala division of Kilifi District being supported by the European Union and Kianda foundation. The institution which was established last year, is offering hospitality courses to female students mainly from the less privileged areas in Kilifi district. He said E.U has injected Kshs 60 million to the project in an effort to provide the youth with opportunities for self reliance.

Other districts which have benefited with the funds include Laikipia and Nairobi. Mr. Rey said the Kenyan population was growing at high rate and therefore the government must create clear polices which will mould the youth to responsible citizens in future by providing them with quality education.

Busia maternal mortality blamed on traditional attendants

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE high maternal death rates in Busia District have been blamed on failure by majority of expectant mothers to deliver in hospitals where there are qualified personnel.

Busia District HIV/AIDS Coordinator, Simon Danda says only 30 percent of expectant mothers in the area deliver in hospitals whereas 70 percent prefer being attended to by traditional birth attendants who are less experienced.

"This situation has in most occasions led to the death of either the infant or mother or both," he explains.

He spoke during a stakeholders forum held in Busia under the auspices of Human Support Organization (HUSO).

The Busia District Nursing Officer, Margaret Atelu through her representative, Lydia Chelagat, encouraged pregnant mothers to visit Ante-natal clinics to allow detection of complications that may arise at childbirth at an early stage and in particular protect newly born children from HIV/AIDS infections through the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT).

Speakers at the forum who included HUSO Programme Coordinator, Isaac Lubiya however revealed that expectant mothers were flocking to traditional birth attendants in fear of being tested for HIV/AIDS, exorbitant charges by health facilities and long distances involved among others.

EAC holds stakeholders forum in Busia

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

INCOME per capita in Kenya has drastically reduced from Kshs 63,000 to a mere Kshs 27,000 owing to the depreciating value of the shilling compared to other currencies in the East African region.

A member of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Gervase Akhabi says the reduction of the country's per capita income has left many Kenyans poorer as major companies ground to a halt.

However, the legislator said the revival of East African Community will benefit the partner states economically and socially since it is people centered and therefore will improve their well-being. Akhabi at the same time said Busia County was likely to reap highly from the regional trade considering that most of the goods being transported to the member states pass through the Busia border.

Responding to claims that security agencies at Malaba border are harassing cross border traders, the legislator said there is need to build confidence by cooperating with the neighbouring member states, adding that security agencies should not create road blocks that will hamper the free movement of goods on transit. "There is need for free movement of people and goods within the partner states," said the legislator.

However, the EALA member expressed dismay at the delays by Kenyan parliament in enacting laws crucial for the actualization of the East African Common Market Protocol that was effected in July last year. "It is sad to note that up to now parliament has not initiated any law to facilitate the implementation of the East African Common Market Protocol," he said.

Among the projects being undertaken by the East African Community (EAC) are management of Lake Victoria Basin, cross-border electrification, communication laws, single entry tourist visas, harmonizing health and drug registration, mutual recognition in education, youth, sports and cultural facilitation, human rights, anti-corruption, ethics, peace and security.

Livestock in Bungoma vaccinated



The government has embarked on Livestock vaccination in Bungoma.

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE Government has embarked on an ambitious programme to upgrade the health of livestock in Bungoma County.

Government officials vaccinated, de-wormed and sprayed over 15, 000 cows in just one day in the first phase of the project. Over 5, 000 sheep and goats and a few hundred donkeys were also included in the programme.

Livestock PS Ken Lusaka announced that over 2, 000 dogs were also vaccinated and sprayed in various areas within Bungoma County. "The animals in Bungoma are really emaciated. We cannot fight poverty with these kind of animals," Lusaka pointed out. The campaign launch targeted farmers in Mt Elgon, Bumula, Kanduyi and Kimilili areas.

Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) assured farmers that there is a ready market for the animals as long as they

meet international standards.

"We have received huge orders from Egypt and the Middle East. We want you to help us to meet the high demand by rearing quality animals," said Ali Hassan Mohamed of KMC.

He appealed to farmers to seek bank loans to maintain their livestock.

"We buy animals in kilos. The problem with animals from Bungoma is that they are poorly maintained. Cows are the size of goats," he added.

The national coordinator of Pam African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign Pamela Olet said farmers make hardly any money from their animals.

"Animals are becoming smaller because of inbreeding. We very well know that inbreeding is a curse when it happens in humans," she told farmers. She further appealed to farmers to change the breeds of animals they rear. "We cannot be part of Vision 2030 with these kind of animals. These animals

just increase poverty levels," she added. The three made the remarks at Matili village in Kimilili during the launch of the campaign. Farmers were urged to form small groups which can be aided to start economic viable projects. The PS said such groups would be given dairy cows and goats as part of their projects.

Women groups in Namirembe village in Bumula became the first to benefit from the project when they were given 39 dairy goats. Lusaka regretted that farmers in the county have reared the same breeds of animals for decades. "We must have a strategy to fight poverty. The problem here is that there are farmers who fear that they might bewitched if they keep grade animals," he said.

"We will hold meetings with locals and urge them to change," he noted.

Mohamed said rearing beef cattle would help farmers get out of poverty because of the huge demand.

Kenya launches polio vaccination along border with Uganda

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE Ministry of Health and Sanitation has launched the fourth round of polio vaccination along nine districts bordering Uganda in North Rift region.

This comes in the wake of an outbreak of polio virus in Bugiri district in Uganda which borders Busia district in Kenya which causes fears due to the geographical proximity and interactive of people in the region.

Speaking recently in Kitale, Dr. Collins Tabu said the Ministry in collaboration with Unicef, World Health Organisation and other stakeholders are conducting a free polio vaccination between in high risk areas.

Dr. Tabu revealed that about 1.3 million children aged between 0 to 5 years have been targeted for vaccination from the 22 high-risk districts.

He told health workers, Provincial Administration, politicians, community leaders and other stakeholders to encourage parents to enroll their children for vaccination in the campaign period.

Polio remains endemic in Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan, with Angola, Chad and Democratic Republic of the Congo suspected of having re-established transmission of poliovirus.

Several more countries had ongoing outbreaks in 2010 due to importations of poliovirus.

Pokomo, Somali communities told to live in peace

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

TANA Delta DC, Mr. Elias Kithaura, has asked farmers and pastoralists communities residing within Ndera location to share available natural resources equitably.

Addressing a meeting at Baratiro area recently, the DC urged members of the Pokomo and Somali communities to respect private property and appreciate their cultural diversity in order to check on conflicts.

He was reacting to claims by farmers that some herdsmen were driving cattle to graze on farms at Ndera location. He asked residents, leaders and councils of elders from the communities to meet regularly for discussions on peace building.

The DC urged farmers to seek advice on modern methods from agricultural extension officers.

Mr. Kithaura asked agricultural extension officers to step up the mobilization and sensitization of farmers on the use of irrigation pumps to enhance crop production.

Meanwhile, the prices of horticulture products in Malindi town

have drastically gone down following torrential rains that have enhanced supply of goods. A 100 kg bag of potatoes is retailing at Kshs.3,200, down from Kshs.3,500 recently.

A bag of oranges is retailing at Kshs.3,800, down from Kshs.4,000 recently. The price of a kilo of spinach has fallen from Kshs.30 to Kshs.25, while Sukuma wiki is selling at Kshs.25 from Kshs.30.

A crate of tomatoes is retailing at Kshs.2,700, up from Kshs.2,600 recently. A kg of tomatoes is selling at Kshs.90 up from Kshs.80 recently.

One Avocado is retailing at Kshs.15, while a bunch of rose flowers has been retailing at Kshs.300. A stalk of a rose flower is retailing at Kshs.30 and 25 kg sack of local rice at Kshs.3,000, down from Kshs.3,200 recently.

The price of beans has shot up to Kshs.7,200 per 90 kg bag, up from Kshs.7,000 recently. A net of red onions is selling at Kshs.900. A kg of carrots is still selling at Kshs.40 and cabbage at Kshs.50 per piece.

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Showdown looms in the coffee industry

By MORRIS GITHENYA

A MAJOR showdown looms in the coffee industry following a directive by a government backed coffee marketing firm that farmers should stop contracting private millers.

Kenya Cooperative Coffee Exporters (KCCE) is pushing to wedge competitors out of the industry and is promising farmers impressive returns should they terminate their contracts with private millers.

Addressing leaders from coffee cooperative societies leaders in Murang'a County at the Mothers Union Hall, Muchiri said that the firm will convene a series of meetings in

different parts of the country to sensitize farmers on how to tap from the great potential in the sector if they choose the right marketer.

The entry of KCCE into the coffee industry has seen coffee prices go up with a Kilogramme of cherry costing Kshs 90 up from Kshs50 two years ago.

"We forced millers and market-

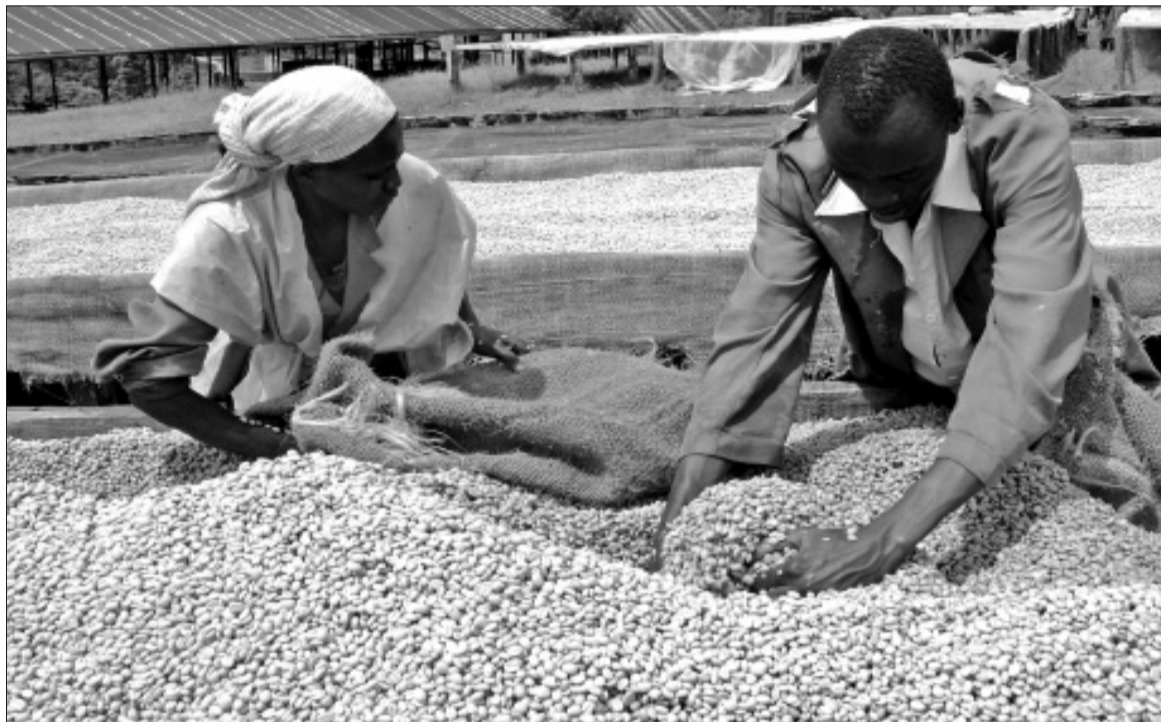
ers who have been minting billions of shillings in the industry, to increase farmers payments," said Muchiri.

The move by KCCE came as it emerged that farmers in Murang'a have already contracted Nyambene coffee mills, Mathira Coffee mills and Sasini as their preferred millers for a period of one year.

Muchiri who is also chairman of

Cooperative Bank of Kenya however disclosed that cooperative societies wishing to end their contracts with private millers and marketers will be assisted financially. KCCE was targeting to be the sole marketing agent for 7,000 coffee cooperative societies by end of next year.

In Kenya there are 12,000 registered cooperative societies.



COFFEE FARMERS: Coffee farmers should stop contracting private millers.

Fish farmers in Kisii get Kshs. 5 million cooler

By BOB OMBATI

FISH farmers from Nyaguta village, Kiogoro Location in Kisii county are set to benefit from a Kshs. 5 million cooler from the government this financial year.

Kisii central District Fisheries officer (DFO), Edwin Muga says the machine will cushion them from losses they incur anytime their produce goes bad. The DFO says that the cooler will be placed at a location with the highest fish production in order to be utilized fully.

The DFO who was accompanied by the French Ambassador to Kenya Etienne de Poncins made the remarks at Nyaguta during a visit to Nyaguta Star Self help Group which is engaged in fish farming. Muga urged area farmers to diversify their activities and venture into aquaculture in a bid to alleviate poverty.

Similarly, the DFO revealed that nine metric tons of fish have since been harvested from 10 fish ponds in the area, adding, that they expect to harvest more from the remaining 100 ponds. "I am happy to report that the area has more fish ponds than any other because farmers have realized the importance of rearing the same. We are optimistic that the biting poverty levels will be history if we all embrace fish farming," Muga said.

The Ambassador said his government had pumped Kshs 3.8m towards fish farming in the area and encouraged farmers to utilize the money to increase productivity.

The Envoy, who officially opened the project dubbed "Financial assistance to commercial Aquaculture Producer of Africa for the Development of aquaculture in Kisumu region", pointed out that the region and particularly Kisii provided the waters used in aquaculture in Kenya.

He noted that commercial aquaculture in Kenya is faced with myriad of challenges ranging from access to fish food, fingerlings to financial technical management. Poncins said the project being implemented by the French government was geared towards addressing the problems faced in aquaculture in order to come up with lasting solutions and sustainable aquaculture frameworks in the region.

He asserted the project made more sense because Lake Victoria had been subjected to environmental issues with the problems of sea weed that invaded the lake hindering fishermen from carrying out their activities.

The ambassador disclosed that he was pleased and satisfied to see the project create a synergy with many stakeholders in the country.

He observed the funding complemented the initiative of the Kenyan Government that was currently supporting 20,000 basins dedicated to aquaculture nationally.

The envoy was accompanied by Eastern Nyanza regional Commissioner Lydia Muriuki, Harrison Charo a researcher with KEMFRI, Olivier Mikolasek research officer in International Center for Development and Research (CIRAD), and Damien Deprez, (CAPA).

Busia County gets cash for poverty eradication

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Poverty Eradication Commission (PEC) has disbursed a total of Kshs3.6million to 31 community interest groups in Busia County.

Addressing beneficiaries after presenting them with cheques at the Busia Township Youth Polytechnic recently, Busia District Commissioner Mwiandi Gitonga urged them to invest in income generating activities that will empower them to earn their daily bread.

"Utilize the funds well and ensure you have identified viable projects that will generate income and help improve on your living standards," said the DC, who cautioned the youth against sharing out the money amongst themselves instead of investing in viable income generating activities.

The DC expressed concern that for the last two years, the commission had loaned a total of Kshs4million to the youth in the district but only Kshs300,000 has so far been repaid.

"The money is a revolving fund that must be repaid so that others can also benefit," he said, adding that the cash was not a political campaign tool as construed by most youth who have refused to pay back. The commissioner at the same time cautioned the youth in the district against depending on hand-outs from politicians.

"Do not depend on hand-outs from politicians most of whom want to buy the youth in pursuit of their political gains," said Gitonga, adding that they should instead invest in viable income generating activities that will in the long empower them economically.

The Busia District Development Officer (DDO) Charles Waichari on his part said the District Monitoring and Evaluation team will visit beneficiaries to see how they are progressing and also help them tackle the challenges they face.

He assured the beneficiaries that those who will repay the loan in good time will receive additional funding of not less than Kshs25,000 to enable them boost on their investments.

Among the activities being undertaken by the 31 community interest groups include pig rearing, poultry keeping, horticulture, pineapple farming, cereal business, fish mongering, dairy farming, table banking, tailoring and second hand clothes business among others.

KSB told to give contracts to farmers so they can vote

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

Over 20,000 sugar cane farmers in Kakamega County may not take part in the upcoming Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) elections slated for this month due to lack of valid documents.

KSB has since been asked to avail farming contracts to new farmers to enable them take part in the elections set for July 12.

Mumias Sugar Cane Growers Association Chairman Simon Wesechere said registers from the millers and the Ministry of Agriculture need to be harmonised to avoid confusion during the polls. "We have farmers still waiting for their contract documents. These farmers could miss out on the elections if the documents will not be availed to them soon," said Wesechere.

Wesechere said polls announced by the Agriculture Minister Sally Kosgey

need to be free and fair. He said the ministry should ensure farmers who joined the sector recently get documents.

Kosgey has also issued guidelines for the polls. The guidelines indicate that farmers should have contracts issued by their millers for them to be legible to vote apart from having a national identification card.

The farmers must also prove that they are registered in the zone they will cast their vote. KSB Western Regional Manager Laban Mulehi said the board is ready for the polls.

He said farmers should use the 10 days period to verify their details for them to take part in the polls.

"We have received most of the materials for the elections. Hopefully, the exercise will go on well," said Mulehi who was speaking in his Kakamega office.

Mulehi explained that the board has also trained the agricultural officers on

the requirements of the farmers and the candidates to avoid disputes during the polls.

He noted that the board has started with inspection of the registers by farmers at zone level where farmers are expected to confirm their details in readiness for the elections.

Several candidates have so far declared their interest to run for the positions of directorship in Mumias, West Kenya and Nzoia zones. KSB former directors Muhammed Mukhwana, Ewing Mwombe and the board chairman Saul Busolo are also defending their seats.

Mumias sugar zone has attracted candidates who include Fred Lutah of Matungu, Former Mumias Out Growers Chairmen Faustine Otsieno and Vincent Sambula.

Mumias MP Ben Washiali promised that legislators in the sugar belt will not interfere with the campaigns.

Farmers seek MPs help to buy Nzoia sugar company

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

SUGARCANE farmers from Mumias sugar belt want MPs from the region to mobilise funds for the purchase of shares at the Nzoia Sugar Company once it is privatised.

The farmers said MPs led by Cabinet minister Wycliffe Oparanya and Soita Shitanda should lead the way in planning how the locals will invest in the company and hotels set to be privatised.

Led by Mumias Sugar Cane Growers Association Chairman Simon Wesechere, the farmers said the leaders should not concentrate on political matters at the expense of development.

"We have not mobilised resources

to enable us buy shares when Nzoia and Kakamega Golf Hotel are privatised and yet time is running out," said Wesechere. Wesechere said the economy of the region will remain weak if the leaders do not focus on programmes aimed at strengthening the financial base of the residents.

He explained that the policy papers discussed in last year's Western Investment Forum need to be translated into action by empowering residents to invest in sugar and hotel industries.

He explained that Kakamega County being the second largest in the country should create employment opportunities to the youths by ensuring that leaders mobilise resources to invest in the hotel industry.

Privatisation Commission of Ken-

ya has already toured Bungoma and Kakamega Counties where it assessed the value of the Kakamega Golf Hotel and Sunset in Kisumu.

The commission also extended its tour to Nzoia Sugar Company to value the property before being privatised.

Nzoia Out Growers Company (NOCO) is also preparing farmers in Bungoma County to be ready to purchase shares when the milling company is privatised.

Wesechere who was addressing a farmers field day at Bumini village in East Wanga Division said it will be regrettable if the local hotel and Nzoia are listed among the institutions to be privatised yet there are no funds mobilised.

Industries warned against polluting rivers

By PETER MUTUKU

POLLUTION of rivers in lower Eastern Province by industries, burst sewers, sand harvesting and charcoal burning pose the greatest environmental concern to residents.

Speaking in his office, Machakos District Environment Officer, Mr Stephen Kimutu cites Athi River which he notes has been heavily polluted with raw industrial chemical effluence and sewerage from within and without the town.

He says pollution of the entire river that traverses the entire Ukambani region and provides drinking water for people and animals was alarming.

He says effluence from Nairobi City, Thika, Ruiru, Machakos and Athi River towns was a threat to the health and welfare of communities living downstream.

"The industrial and sewerage discharge into Athi River and its tributaries had made the resource unfit for human and livestock consumption," cautions the officer. He says that recently samples of water were taken for investigation but results are yet to be released.

Mr. Kimutu says residents along the river had often reported cases of dead fish floating on the water as well as frequent outbreaks of cholera that indicates high levels of pollution. He says plastic paper bags had been trapped on river banks as well as invasion of water hyacinth that thrive on polluted waters.

The officer says commercial sand harvesters had deprived residents of water resources in addition to dumping automobile oils into the river.

Mr. Kimutu says commercial charcoal burning had led to the destruction of indigenous trees that had contributed to arid and semi arid areas to suffer the effects of deforestation. These include frequent drought and excessively high temperatures. He asked leaders and other members of the public to embrace environmental conservation for better standards of living.

Workers oppose plans by Busia to retrench them

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya Local Government Workers Union (KLGWU) has rejected plans by Busia Municipal Council to lay off over 50 workers in its restructuring process.

KLGWU is demanding that the council shelve its plans until consultations are held between the workers and the union. "We shall move to court to block the exercise if the council does not follow the right procedure," said the union's Western Regional Secretary Juvenas Oora.

Orao said the union's General Secretary Boniface Munyao has forwarded the matter to the Ministry of Local Government seeking intervention. He said Munyao and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Local Government Musalia Mudavadi have the final say over the matter. He explained that the council does not have the mandate to lay off workers, as it will be a violation of the new Constitution and Labour Laws.

He pointed out that the union is still pursuing the reinstatement of other eight workers who were sacked by the council illegally. He added that the new bid to lay off 50 others, amounts to mismanagement of resources at the council by the chief officers and the councillors.

Speaking to the press in Kakamega town, Orao said the council should improve the welfare of the workers instead of sacking them.

Drought renders Kitui youth tree project useless



The Mumoni DC Tobiko Nayioma addressing the Environment day celebrations at Kalatine market recently. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

By KAVYU-KURA

THE Kshs.2 million the government spent on Kazi Kwa Vijana environmental projects in Mumoni District of Kitui County has gone to waste as there is nothing to show on the ground.

The area District Commissioner Tobiko Nayioma laments that the money pumped into planting of 20,000 trees last year was a big waste since all the plants have dried up due to drought.

He says although the drought situation was largely to blame for the tree planting project fiasco, institutions

like schools where most of the trees were planted also failed in their duty by not taking the initiative to water them and ensure they survived.

The DC was speaking recently at Kalatine trading centre in Kakuyu location in Mumoni district during the World environment day celebrations. Earlier while flanked by the Mwingi Region Nema officer Patricia Wambua, he led wananchi in the market centres to a sweeping exercise.

"In future we must strive to make such projects viable by watering the trees with the little water available. The government cannot continue to

invest in such large sums of money to pay the youth to plant trees while it has nothing to show for it at the end of the day," lamented Nayioma.

Reacting to claims by the local public health officer David Mutisya that less than 40 percent of households in Mumoni had latrines, Nayioma said that lack of toilets only helped to adulterate the environment as residents had turned bushes into toilets.

He directed that all homesteads in the area put up at least makeshift pit latrines using locally available materials before he considered legal action against families that did not have toilet

facilities.

"I want you to ensure you have latrines in your homes before I order a swoop to have those who do not have toilets identified, arrested and taken to court," cautioned the DC.

Nayioma also pointed out that the government had passed a law that 10 per cent of all farm land must be put under tree cover as a way of restoring the depleted environment and asked the locals to toe the line lest they face prosecution.

The Nema official decried the widespread felling of trees for charcoal burning and exhorted the locals to conserve and plant more trees in line with this year's World environment day celebrations theme; "Forests-Nature at your service."

"We need to aggressively protect our forest cover and whenever we cut one tree we must make sure we plant two or more in replacement," said Ms. Wambua.

Borabu DC alarmed by gun violence among the police

By BOB OMBATI

THE government should develop stress management strategies for police officers to curb increased cases of suicide and senseless killings that have been witnessed in the recent past. Borabu District Commissioner, Mohamed Hassan Noor decries escalating cases where junior police officers kill their seniors and commit suicide, linking it to unmanaged stress from their work places and families.

The administrator urged security officers to focus on managing stress, to stop the killings that have tarnished the image of the police force as witnessed recently.

Noor was addressing police officers at the District headquarters after promoting 12 officers to various ranks for their exemplary service especially in combating cattle theft and after undergoing various administrative courses.

He lamented that last year an AP officer in his area shot his workmate before shooting himself, attributing it failure by the officer to effectively manage stress in his work place.

The DC revealed that one officer from the district had been trained on stress management, adding that he will aid others in guidance and counseling sessions to manage their stress at work and relate well with their colleagues.

Noor appealed to troubled officers to promptly seek assistance to manage their stress and asked other officers to help their colleagues cope with work related and family stress. Flanked by area Officer Commanding police Division (OCPD) Ramson Ololmodoni, he lauded the officers for maintaining law and order along the volatile Borabu- Sotik district border, stressing they had managed to reduce rampant cattle rustling along the common border and enhancing peaceful co-existence.

During the exercise, seven privates were promoted to Corporals, three Corporals to sergeants, a Sergeant to a senior Sergeant while one officer was promoted to the rank of Chief inspector.

Mombasa residents urged to conserve the environment

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has called on the residents of Mombasa County to actively participate in the conservation of the environment.

UNDP Kenya Country Deputy Director, Mr. Thomas ole Kuyan, says the County can only realize a clean environment if all players and communities are actively involved in sustainable programmes such as garbage collection and disposal. The official says the coastal town was currently choking with uncollected garbage and residents should not wait for local authorities to do so.

He was speaking at the first Conservation Eco-fest held at Mama Ngina

Grounds where hundreds of activists converged to raise awareness on environmental issues. Mr. Kuyan, who was accompanied by National Co-ordinator for UNDP, Ms. Nancy Chege, reaffirmed his organisation's commitment to supporting community based organizations (CBOs) and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working in the area of conservation.

"I would also like to encourage primary, secondary and tertiary schools to instill the virtues of conserving the environment to our children as this would ensure that a whole generation will grow up with the discipline of conserving our environment," he said.

Ms. Chege said UNDP will in a few months time give grants to CBOs

and NGOs working for the sustainable management of the environment. "The organization is seeking proposals from CBOs and NGOs across the country to apply for the grants," she added.

The officials also commended the farming of Jatropha trees by communities at Kaloleni and Magarini, saying it has created employment opportunities for the youth and also helped in the production of environmentally friendly diesel fuel from the seeds.

"This has been a source of income for residents. Therefore proposals that create both employment within communities while at the same time helping in conservation and recycling efforts would be given priority for funding," she said.

Busia traders attend business management training

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Kenya Institute of Business Training (KIBT) has organized a series of training sessions for the business community in Busia County.

The training which targets members of the Busia Cross-Border Trade Association seeks to enhance their capacity to effectively manage cross border trade. Similar trainings are running in other border points namely Malaba, Namanga and Lunga Lunga.

Busia District Commissioner Mr Mwiandi Gitonga says the training is being implemented with support from the Common Market in Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and will mainly benefit small scale cross border

traders.

"I believe the course provides an insight on cross border trade and will enable traders to overcome the myriad challenges facing their operations," said Gitonga, adding that the very idea of training is to capacity build cross border traders to carry out business legally across the border.

Gitonga at the same time commended Trade Ministry for overseeing the introduction of the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) where small scale traders with consignments below 500 US dollars have been exempted from paying duty.

The administrator further said he hoped the objective of COMESA which is to facilitate smooth trade

within the member states and removal of non-tariff barriers will be realized.

He pointed out that the current trade policies favoured aggressive search for export market which consistently promoted diversification and industrialization endeavours.

The DC assured the cross border traders that the government is committed to creating an enabling environment and the necessary support so that the cross border trade can thrive and flourish.

"I strongly urge you to implement the knowledge and skills you have acquired during the five- day training workshop so as to realize benefits thereof," said the provincial administrator.

Kyuso traders wants local civil servants transferred

By KAVYU-KURA

THE business community in Kyuso town within Kitui County has called for an immediate overhaul of public servants in the area.

A meeting convened by Kyuso Traders' Association and chaired by Muniyoki Musya turned into a bashing ground for civil servants as speakers accused them of laxity, corruption and dishonesty.

A representative of the water department Peter Mutua was put to task over the frequent water shortages and ejected from the meeting held at the Kyuso town market stalls.

His attempts to explain why Kyuso town had not been supplied with tapped water four years after President Mwai Kibaki commissioned the multi-million Kwa Kathukya-Kandwia-Gai-Kyuso pipeline project in May 2007, fell on deaf ears as those in attendance became hostile and shouted him down.

The traders had also sought an explanation from Mutua why the water department had stealthily contracted a firm to dig trenches and lay pipes within the town without involving the local community.

Mutua provoked the wrath of the traders when he insisted that the locals had been given jobs by the contractor and that he could not disclose the cost of the contract.

A trader John Kitura



Muniyoki Musya chairing the Kyuso traders' association meeting. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Nguli demanded that Mutua who represented the Kyuso District water officer Julius Muindi leave the meeting as he was unable to offer any satisfactory answers.

Other speakers who included Syunzi Masila who is a business woman in the area suggested that the government transfers long serving officers at the Kyuso district water department as their performance was wanting.

The meeting further called for the removal of a long serving officer at the Kyuso livestock department who had allegedly been involved in illegal acquisition of plots in Kyuso town.

A number of traders claimed that they had been conned thousands of shillings by civil servants in the area promising to allocate them plots in the town.

Musya promised that stern

measures would be taken against wayward civil servants.

He added that the association will work closely with the clerk of Mwingi county council Elijah Mutambuki to reclaim grabbed commercial plots including the Kyuso public cemetery land.

They said they would henceforth remain vigilante and expose dishonest civil servants who fiddled public resources.

Chamber wants Kakamega market finished quickly

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) wants construction of the Kshs54 million Kakamega Municipal Council market hastened.

KNCCI said the contractor working on the project should speed up work as traders who were relocated to pave way for construction are suffering.

"The contractor should speed up as traders are suffering as heavy rains pound the region," said Fred Chitechi, a director at KNCCI In Charge of Youths Affairs Programmes.

Chitechi remarks comes shortly after assistant minister Manjala Keya toured the market and expressed concern over the slow pace of the construction works.

Keya said the council should force the contractor to hire adequate personnel to facilitate faster construction of the market.

He regretted that traders are being forced to operate in filthy places to pave way for the construction. Keya said the traders have complained to him lamenting that heavy rains interfere with their sales.

Keya who is an assistant minister for Gender and Children Affairs explained that traders require stalls to store their goods.

Currently, traders go home with their merchandise. "Traders are incurring huge costs that would have been reduced if market stalls were complete," said Keya.

Chitechi said the council should take up the matter to avoid protests from the traders. He said some traders are operate in health hazard places and require to be relocated.

Pomp and color during Mahiga prize giving day

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

IT was song and dance as winners received awards during the prize giving day/ Education Day of Mahiga Zone in Othaya held recently.

The colourful Education day was held at Mahiga Girls Secondary School.

Mahiga zone is one of the three education zones in Nyeri South district.

It has 18 nursery schools, 16 public primary schools, two private primary school, eight secondary schools, one technical institute and two village polytechnics.

Public primary schools have 145 teachers with a shortfall of five teachers.

On enrolment, there are 2,123 boys and 1,999 girls making a total of 4,122 in the 16 primary

schools.

In the zonal secondary schools, there are 102 teachers instead of the recommended 149 teachers in the 68 streams. The eight secondary schools have 1,388 boys and 1,685 girls making a total population of 3,073 students.

However, the stakeholders lamented that the performance of primary schools is below average.

In the year 2009, the zone had a mean score of 231.99. In the year 2010, the mean score was 238.11 which was the rise of 6.12.

The dismal performance spills over to the district secondary schools who admit the bulk of the primary schools pupils who attain 249 marks and below.

However, the zone has been taking action to improve on

provision of quality education through holding regular meetings with stakeholders who are now playing a more active role in the zone and also insisting on effective curriculum supervision and implementation.

The zone has also advised head teachers to be strongly effective, efficient and accountable to stakeholders and also holding awareness meetings with all teachers in the zone among other activities.

Organizing subjects insets for teachers, inducting head teachers and key resource teachers on the school empowerment programme, enhancing assessment of schools and embracing effective 40/35 concept in our schools are some of the other efforts the zone has been undertaking to improve on provision of quality education.



Students of Mahiga Girls Secondary School in Othaya entertain guests at their school grounds recently. This was during the Mahiga Zone Prize Giving day. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

New Media Council director challenges Journalists

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

JOURNALISTS have been challenged to sharpen their reporting tools as the media industry is changing very fast.

The Executive Director of the Media Council of Kenya, Haron Mwangi, said as media changes from analogue to digital, the reporting opportunities are expanding and have to be exploited. "The platform is becoming diverse and content is what matters to access the audience", advised the Executive director.

He, however, blamed media practitioners for being lazy and failing to engage in investigative journalism that has the potential to generate debate and have pertinent issues addressed by policy makers.

"Some of the journalists are very lazy to investigate stories, to give them other angles to make them lively and interesting to the audiences", he added. Mwangi was addressing a training workshop for journalists on role of media in constitutional implementation process in Eldoret.

He told participants about the difficult environment under which the media was operating economically and politically. "The bottom line of media houses is to make profit, pursue strategies of getting a large audience to sell to advertisers", he said.

He explained that media houses relied heavily on their advertisers for sustainability purposes and tend to shun stories that are likely to affect their investments. "As a rule, the media owners opt to please advertisers by having simple stories to attract audiences without disrupting them," he added.

He lamented that this approach constrains the capacity of journalists to engage the public on issues affecting them and reporting about their conditions of living.

Murang'a youth fund lying idle — Ndeti

By MORRIS GITHENYA

MILLIONS of shillings earmarked for the Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF) in Murang'a County remain unclaimed as targeted beneficiaries fail to apply for funding.

Sports and Youth Affairs Assistant Minister Wanyiva Ndeti says Murang'a region has the least number of applicants seeking for funding from the youth kitty since its establishment five years ago.

Addressing a leaders meeting in Murang'a town, Wanyiva reveals that only Kshs15 million has been disbursed to the youth groups in all the seven constituencies in the county.

"Millions of shillings still lie uncollected by the youth due to various reasons which leaders must help to resolve," adds the Kathiani Member of Parliament. She points out that since the inception of the fund, more than Kshs.3.1 billion has been disbursed to the youth in various parts of the country.

The meeting was attended by the provincial administration and clergymen to help explore ways that will enhance accessibility of the funds to the youth. She said officials from the enterprise fund will visit all the 47 counties to sensitize the youth on importance of applying for funding from the kitty.

The Fund Chief Executive Officer Juma Mwatata said plans are underway to transform the fund to a commercial bank. He pointed out that the project will be rolled out on a pilot basis in 8 counties that have been listed as poor starting September this year. "We want a situation where the youth from all walks of life can access the funds without difficulties," said Mwatata.

Use latrines: Central Kenya residents told

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 260,000 people in Central Kenya relieve themselves in the bush due to lack of pit latrines.

A workshop on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Nyeri town recently heard that about six per cent of the 4.3 million population in the Central region do not have latrines and so they relieve themselves in the bush.

Central Provincial Public Health Officer Mr Samuel Muthinji said that remote areas of Kienu constituency are the hardest hit since many people have not dug latrines.

The officer said this is dangerous and can lead to outbreak of diseases like diarrhoea.

"At least 94 percent of the population has access to latrines and only six per cent do not have the vital facility. Most of the urban areas have the facility and this will prevent the outbreak of many diseases like diarrhoea," said the Provincial Public Health Officer.

He said that the Government is committed to ensuring that every home has a latrine by year 2013.

Muthinji added that the sewerage systems within towns must be fully operational as they are vital facilities in urban areas.

"The waste disposal or refuse management within urban areas should also be done well by the municipal councils since this can lead to disease outbreaks. The manner in which Nyeri Municipal Council is doing its work is not impressing at all," added Muthinji.

Already the ministry has taken the council in court over the manner in which the council is handling waste disposal within Nyeri town.

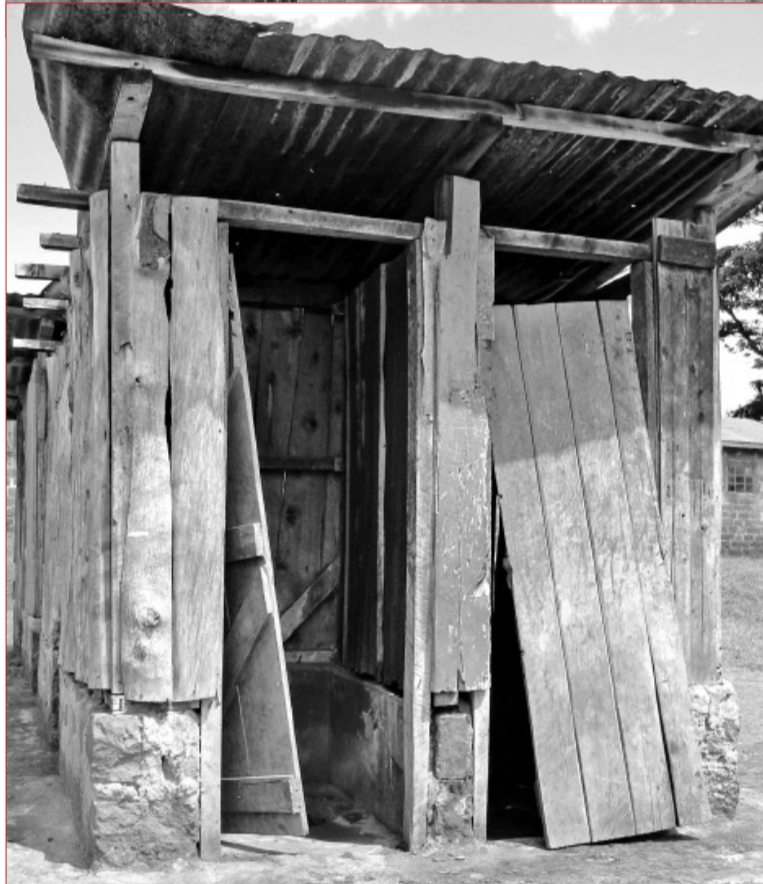
At the same time, he said only one per cent of the population wash their hands using soaps an issue he said is very discouraging.

Over 46 per cent of the population has access to safe and portable water in the region.

Muthinji said the ministry is committed to improving the sanitation sector by the year 2020.

He said about 80 per cent of the diseases brought about by poor sanitation can be prevented if there is there is safe water, good hygiene and sanitation is maintained.

"Diarrhoea for children under



Pupils at a primary school in Othaya play at the school grounds behind the latrines. The Ministry of Public Health recommends that all the schools should have good latrines for the pupils. Photos/Joseph Mukubwa

Some areas in Central Kenya do not have latrines are in bad state such as these ones in a primary school in Othaya. The Ministry of Public Health recommends that all the schools should have good toilets for the pupils.

five years is the most common disease and all schools should have proper toilets and good piped water," added the public officer.

The workshop was attended by all departmental heads, NGOs and church organizations among others.

He also warned that local authorities will not be allowed to operate public markets without a public toilet.

Muthinji said the Ministry is facing many challenges including lack of financial support from development partners and also low priority given to environmental hygiene and sanitation.

"The environmental hygiene and sanitation policy has not been disseminated at all levels and delay in development of hygiene and sanitation strategy and guidelines are also other challenges facing the sector.

He concluded that there is inadequate human resource in the Ministry.

Uhuru targets manufacturing sector to spur growth

By PETER MUTUKU

THE steel, cement and iron sectors are the greatest beneficiaries of this year's budgetary allocation as Kenya embarks on the provisions of cost effective infrastructure and services as a pre-requisite to the realization of Vision 2030.

The development and maintenance of facilities is crucial for rapid economic growth and poverty reduction. Their availability positively affects production costs, employment creation, access to markets and investment.

To put in place the right environment for growth, the Government has invested Kshs221 billion in infrastructure development that constitutes more than 5 percent of total allocation made in the 2011/2012 financial year.

This is about 300 percent hike in allocation as compared 2010/2011 financial year which stood at Kshs 78.6 billion or an increase of Kshs20 billion or 34 percentage points over the amount allocated in 2009/2010 for road maintenance.

The thrust of the allocation is in tandem with global trends for a country that is in line with goals of realising fast economic growth.

"When we talk of economic growth we are talking about developing water, roads and electricity to levels that can sustain proposed economic projections," says Architectural Association of Kenya Chairman Mr. Sawe Oundo.

In what is seen as the highest allocation to a single sector in the country's history, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta

set the ball rolling by giving estimates of the opportunity costs.

He says its costs about Kshs100,000 to transport a 20 foot container from Mombasa to Nairobi and an entire day. The container would cost about Kshs40,000 and delivered in just about four hours by modern railway transport.

The Minister allocated an extra Kshs 1.9 billion in the 2011/12 budget for the construction of a new branch line from Embakasi Railway Station of Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA). The completion of the rail will make commuting to and from the airport faster, comfortable and cheaper.

The project will also cut the cost of transportation for residents of Kitengela, Athi River, Embakasi, Pipeline, Imara Daima and others

along Mombasa road. The move will also enhance movement by avoiding slower alternatives.

Up to Kshs 1 billion were also allocated for the upgrade of Nairobi-Ruiru via Makadara, Dandora, Githurai and Kahawa railway line to expand passenger services by at least ten fold. This is expected to make it affordable to many Kenyans commuting daily to work in the city and reduce traffic congestion.

Demand for cement went up by 16.2 percent to 3,104,800 tonne in 2010 compared with 2,671,200 tonnes in 2009.

Consumption of cement will probably hit 10,000,000 tonnes in 2012. But Mr. Oundo says although the amount used in the sector is more than what was allocated last year, it remains a drop in the ocean.

Parliament demands list of FPE fraudsters

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

MEMBERS of Parliament now want Education Minister Prof. Sam Ongeru to table before Parliament the full list of officers implicated in the theft of the Free Primary Education (FPE) funds and what action he has taken against them.

Led by Ikolomani MP Boni Khawale, Parliament is also seeking the names of head teachers and schools that were involved in the scandal and what action has been taken against the said teachers.

Prof. Ongeru, who was once saved by the President after his purported sacking by Prime Minister Raila Odinga is now facing the Ikolomani MP who is famed for sweeping Trade Minister Amos Kimunya to the cold of the backbench through his motion of no confidence.

The demand comes in the wake of Finance Ministry's audit report which points to losses running to Kshs 4.6 billion.

The report has seen the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission director PLO Lumumba call for resignation of the Minister and his Permanent Secretary citing poor leadership that leaves loopholes for graft.

The Kenya National Association of Parents (KNAP) has also issued a 21-day notice to the Ministry of Finance to release a full report on the missing 4.6 billion shillings from the FPE kitty.

Through the Secretary General Musau Ndunda, KNAP wants to compare details in the report with what the association has compiled, adding that the audit conducted by Treasury was not conclusive.

The Secretary General further said he has copies of cheques, vouchers and bank statements that show that the Kenya Education Sector Support Program funds stolen stood at Kshs 5.5 billion and not the figure stated by Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta.

Ndunda said it was KNAP that blew the whistle on misappropriation of funds by education ministry officials in 2009 but the latter denied the claims terming them as mere allegations.

He wondered why Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission boss P.L.O Lumumba was demanding the resignation of both the minister and PS yet he reserved the right to prosecute them if he thought they were involved in the scam.

"This is a very serious scandal and we request the President and Prime Minister to stamp their authority," he demanded.

He called for an independent audit into the scandal saying that the list of names of those implicated had left out many people.

Mr. Ndunda also demanded that property of those implicated be frozen and ongoing investigations be hastened to pave for their prosecution. Ndunda warned that KNAP will release the full report if treasury does not publicize the full report in



Parliament in session: Now MPs demand full list of officers implicated in the theft of the FPE funds.

the 21 days.

Meanwhile UK envoy to Kenya Rob Macaire lauded the forensic analysis but emphasized the need for the government to prosecute those implicated.

Macaire said Britain would only go back to allocating funds for FPE to the government instead of Non-Governmental Organizations once all risks of possible graft are alleviated.

"We want to see the people who stole this money forced to pay it back. It's absolutely shocking that civil servants entrusted with the education of Kenya's children should steal that money," he said.

Earlier in the year, the government released Kshs10.1 billion to fund the Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) school programmes in the country.

Education Minister Professor Sam Ongeru who released the funds said the amount is the largest single disbursement since 2003 when the Free Primary Education project was launched.

The Cabinet Minister said the amount will benefit 5,663 public secondary schools and 19,000 primary schools in all parts of the country.

Prof Ongeru stated that Secondary Schools have been allocated Kshs6.2 billion at the rate of Kshs3,857 per student while Kshs3.8 billion will go to primary schools, with each pupil getting Kshs460 this term.

"Free Day Secondary Education, tuition fee accounted for Kshs1,388 per child amounting to Kshs2,243,000,000 in total. Operations account was allocated Kshs2,469," he outlined.

But as the government released the funds, several officials at the Ministry remain under investigation by the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission for failing to account for millions of shillings given by the government and donors to fund the Free Primary Education project.

Total disbursements since inception of the programme at present lie at a total of Kshs101 billion with the Free Primary Education funds standing at Kshs60.8 billion while that of the Free Day Secondary Schools lies

at Kshs50.9 billion.

During the announcement, education officials and school heads were warned against the misuse of funds meant for the Free Primary and Secondary Day education programmes.

Prof Ongeru emphasised that stern action will be taken against education officials caught in the act and said the funds allocated should be used prudently as per the instructions given by the Ministry.

"Strong action has been taken against all individuals who have the habit of misusing these funds. Some are already in court and others are going to be arraigned soon. We will deal firmly with individuals who engage in any kind of fraud," he stated.

When Kenya created its Free Education System in 2003, it was lauded internationally for extending education to those who could not afford paying for schooling but a government audit had found that significant portions of the funds could not be accounted for.

At the same time, the Education Minister has outlined government plans to employ more teachers.

"We were able to bring on board over 18,000 teachers through the economic stimulus package within a very short period of time. In our forward planning, we are engaging the Treasury to be able to give us additional numbers of teachers under a similar programme or a different one," he stated.

He said that priority will be given to the funding of early childhood education in the new financial year since it has always been sidestepped.

"I just want to reassure you that we are fully engaged with the Treasury on the issue of early childhood education. You remember that we were to mainstream it in January 2010 but budget was not available. In the July budget which was read in Parliament, unfortunately that bit was excluded," he said.

Uhuru draws CDF curtain

From Page 1

to be addressed by the equalization fund which is slated to receive 0.5 percent of the national revenue for a period of 20 years. "If CDF continues, who will be managing it? Will it be the Senate which is closer to the people or will it be the National Assembly. From whose kitty will the 2.5 percent be drawn from? The national government will say it had disbursed funds to the County level and to the Equalisation Fund. The County on the other hand will be busy setting up base and building and strengthening institutions," she argues.

Her sentiments are echoed by Kizito Wangalwa who is a Governance Consultant. "The Constitution of Kenya is very clear on the functions of the various arms of government and on the principle of devolution. The role of the legislative arm of government does not include community development and thus the need to respect the spirit of the Constitution," he says.

He points out that CDF was a mistake that must be corrected as it was premised on a platform to reform the institutions of service delivery. He says that CDF has entrenched patronage, cronyism and dependence. It has killed community initiative and the social welfare spirit inherent in our society. It has put all focus on the MPs as the solutions to the development needs in the community.

"CDF has demeaned the role of the executive arm of government and the principle of decentralization (devolution). The fund fails to recognize the value of development planning, community participation and resource targeting. Some areas in the constituency have been marginalized, undeserving cases are offered bursaries and structures remain unused for long without offering any services," he laments.

He says that in the event that CDF is retained it should be transformed into a dedicated fund for the sub county.

Says he: "Transform CDF into a Sub County Development Fund. This will help reduce the size of government at the national level and free more resources to the county governments to discharge their service delivery functions."

He at the same time calls for the establishment of a Development Committee (Board) in each County to oversee community development needs.

Wangalwa says MPs and county assembly members in the sub county may participate in the Sub County Development Committee as ex-officio members of the committee. "The Chief Executive of the County (the Governor), with the approval of county assembly, should appoint the other members of the committee, based on established criteria and vetting process," he proposes.

The CDF has been funded to the tune of Kshs 70,956 since inception in 2003. The government has injected a total of Kshs 19 billion in the current financial. An additional grant of Kshs 3.7 billion will go towards the completion of ongoing projects under education, health, water and sanitation in readiness for handing over to the new county government.

However the fund has received poor ratings with most people terming it as unnecessary baggage, whose existence has been characterized by wastefulness, inefficiency and outright corruption.



Pupils of CCM Nanyuki Primary School now learning under tents after the classes were condemned. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

New powerful body to fight

INTRODUCTION

THE legislation provides for general offenses and contains general provisions relating to prosecution, litigation and powers to make regulations.

The framework introduces penalties that range from Kshs.2 million to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve years or both upon conviction.

The law places an obligation on the part of the Authority to trace the proceeds and assets acquired through drug trafficking and advocate for forfeiture.

The Authority will also report bi-annually to the National Assembly and, by extension, to the Kenyan public on measures taken, the information available on trends, drug use etc, and the challenges faced and proposed solutions

The Act vests powers on the Authority to facilitate compliance and ensure there is a co-ordination between the various implementing in the government in order to control and eliminate drug and chemical substance abuse

Powers of the Authority

- (a) facilitate expression of public concerns, dissemination of information and participation in public education relating to drug abuse;
- (b) ensure that promotion of any harmful or addictive drug and chemical substances of abuse amongst children is stopped forthwith;
- (c) spearhead, co-ordinate and monitor drug control and anti-narcotic initiatives to reduce demand and supply of the drugs and chemical substances abuse control;
- (d) facilitate the liaison, co-operation and coordinate working of all ministries, agencies and persons charged with the responsibility of enforcing drug and substances of abuse laws;
- (e) receive and refer to the relevant institutions for investigation and necessary action any complaint or allegation of the production, trafficking, consumption or concealment of drugs or chemical substances of

- abuse;
- (f) ensure that private sector and volunteer organizations dealing with drugs and chemical substances of abuse, which are responsible for the distribution chain, become responsible for the entire chain with no diversions;

Functions of the Authority

The Act has vested the Authority with powers to

- (i) liaise with and support security agencies in the enforcement of legislation against production of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, trafficking and abuse, extradition of suspects; training; assets forfeiture; diversion of precursor chemicals; or other related matters;
- (ii) ensure and support the relevant bodies, organs or departments of government in developing strategies for the surveillance of emerging patterns of abuse, new



A new law that provides for the establishment of a National Drugs Control Authority is in the offing. The legislation proposes a raft of proposals including the dissolution of the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse Authority (NACADAA) to pave way for a more powerful authority with powers to oversee organizations empowered by various statutes to deal with drugs menace in the country. Our staff writer FAITH MUIRURI takes a look at the proposed new authority.

- precursors, new reagents, new solvents, new drugs and their variants as well as emerging modes of production, importation, trafficking, distribution and concealment thereof;
- (iii) develop and maintain proactive cooperation with international institutions in areas relevant to achieving the

- Authority's objectives;
- (iv) monitor trends in the control of drugs abuse at national, regional and international levels
- (v) facilitate the development of treatment and rehabilitation centers and social re-integration programmes, and subsequent management of abstinence;
- (vi) facilitate and ensure the formulation of national policies and plans of action on drugs and chemical substances of abuse control for the relevant bodies, organs or department of Government; facilitate the relevant bodies, organs

- or departments of Government to develop and implement comprehensive and integrated demand reduction and supply reduction programmes; Further, the framework law has empowered the Authority to
- (i) ensure that the policies and strategies to curb drugs and chemical substances abuse are continually reviewed and implemented;
- (ii) facilitate the development of plans, strategies, guidelines and standards of managing drugs, psychotropic and chemical substances dependence;
- (iii) propose effective legislative, regulatory and administrative measures for the reduction of demand and supply of drugs;
- (iv) advise Government ministries, departments and other agencies on matters within its mandate;
- (v) research, collect, collate,

“Ensure that promotion of any harmful or addictive drug and chemical substances of abuse amongst children is stopped forthwith.”



Drug addiction has become a common issue in Kenya.

“Facilitate capacity building of the agencies involved in the fight against drug abuse.”

- analyze, and disseminate relevant data and statistics on drugs and psychotropic substance abuse and serves as the repository of such data;
- (vi) facilitate capacity building for the agencies involved in the fight against drug abuse;
- (vii) prepare, publish and submit a drug and chemical substance of abuse status report biannually to the National Assembly through the

Drug addiction's menace proposed

Minister.

Section 6(1) of the legislation provides for the establishment of a Board to oversee the management of the Authority.

The Board of Directors are to be appointed by the President with the approval by the National Assembly.

The Board is to comprise of—

- (a) a chairperson, who must have experience in public affairs either in judicial service, public service or the private or voluntary sector;
- (b) the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Internal Security;
- (c) the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of public health or his representative;
- (d) seven persons appointed from among healthcare providers, researchers, policy and legal practitioners, media and communication professionals, educationists, security, safety and environment experts, faith based leaders, civil society, associations and public and foreign service professionals
- (e) the Chief Executive Officer is to serve as an exofficio member and secretary to the Board.

The funds of the Authority

In order to guarantee sustainability, the Authority is generate its revenue from

- (a) Ministerial allocations
- (b) Fees, monies or assets as may accrue to or vest in the Authority in the course

Community building for involvement in the fight against drug abuse."

- (c) of the exercise of its powers or the performance of its functions under this Act or under any written law; and
- (c) all monies from any other source provided for or donated or lent to the Authority.

Enforcement Provisions

Section 19(1) stipulates that the Minister in pursuant of recommendations by the Authority is to



Drug addiction harms young generation. Photo/Correspondent

appoint authorised officers for purposes of this Act.

Authorised officers are to be drawn from

- (a) public health officers appointed under the Public Health Act ;
- (b) any other person upon whom any written law vests functions of the maintenance of law and order.

Section 20(1) sets out that in compliance with the Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1994 or any law relating to drugs, an authorised officer may, at any reasonable time, enter any place or premises which the officer believes on reasonable grounds that any person or persons is in any way contravening the provisions of that law.

Section 20(3) states that in carrying out an inspection in

any place, an authorised officer is to

- (a) examine any goods, building, works or thing;
- (b) require any person in such place to produce for inspection, in the manner and form requested by the office any goods, works, drawings, plans, approvals or thing;
- (c) conduct any test or analysis or take any measurements of samples; or
- (d) require any person found in the place to produce for inspection or copying, any written or electronic information that is relevant.

Seizure

Prior to the inspection exercise, section 21(1) provides that a magistrate or judge of the High Court, issues a warrant to the

authorised officer to enter and inspect a premise. However the warrant is to be issued if the magistrate or judge is satisfied by information on oath that:

- (a) entry to the premises is necessary for the administration or enforcement of this Act or other written law relation to drug abuse;
- (c) the occupant does not consent to the entry, or that entry has been refused or there are reasonable grounds for believing that it will be refused.

Further 22(1) states that during inspection, an authorised officer has powers to seize anything by means of which or in relation to which the

officer believes, on reasonable grounds, that this Act or the other written law has been contravened and a full inventory is to be made at the time of such seizure by the officer.

Section 22(4) provides that the affected person applies to

the High Court for an order of restoration within thirty days after the date of seizure, and in addition sends a notice containing the prescribed information to the Minister within the prescribed time and in the prescribed manner.

The High Court can either order for immediate restoration if, on hearing the application, the court is satisfied that-

- (a) the applicant is entitled to

possession of the thing seized; and

- (b) the thing seized is not and will not be required as evidence in any proceedings in respect of an offence under this Act.

Nature of Offences

Section 23(2) outlines that where a corporation, registered society or other similar legal entity commits an offence under this Act, respective directors or officers will take full responsibility in respect of the offence committed by the corporation, society or legal entity whether or not such corporation, society or legal entity has been prosecuted.

Section 23(3) states that all offences under this Act will require sufficient proof that the offence was committed by an employee or agent of the accused.

Section 24. (1) provides that any person who obstructs or hinders, or knowingly makes a false or misleading statement to an authorised officer contravenes the law and is liable to a fine not exceeding Kshs500,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, or to both.

Another notable feature under this section is that information held by the Authority or any other public or private body on drugs and psychotropic substances of abuse shall be open for scrutiny and disclosure for public information purposes.

Regulations

Sections 27(1) allows the Minister, in pursuant of recommendations by the Authority to make Regulations that

- (a) prohibit anything required by this Act to be prohibited;

“The applicant is entitled to possession of the thing seized.”

- (b) prescribe the methods to be used in testing drugs;
- (c) prescribe the information that manufacturers shall provide to the Authority including information on drugs, sales and advertising data, and information on product composition, ingredients, hazardous properties and brand elements.