

The Constitution needs your help

Unless Kenyans rise up to defend the new law, the lords of impunity will derail its implementation, argue analysts

By FAITH MUIRURI

ALTHOUGH the deadlines for implementing the new Constitution are fast approaching, only five laws have been passed against the twenty six legislations required to meet the agreed timelines.

For starters, all constitutional implementation priority bills should all be in place by end of August 2011. The tragedy is that those required laws also have an implication on the date of the next general elections.

Information available at the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution (CIC) indicate that only the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Act, 2011; The Independent Offices (Appointment) Act, 2011; The Supreme Court Act, 2011; The Judicial Service Act, 2011 and The Vetting of Judges and Magistrates Act, 2011 have been finalized.

Laws of utmost urgency currently running behind schedule include the Elections Bill, Political Parties Bill, the Ethics and Anti Corruption Bill, the Kenya National Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill, legislation on Citizenship, legislation on Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, vacation of office of Member of Parliament, all legislations on devolution, and the legislation on Contingencies Fund and Loan Guarantee by National Government.

Matters are further complicated by the failure by law drafting teams to fast-track the process.

The delays largely blamed on the sluggish pace in preparing the bills now threaten to compromise the quality of debate on the bills and the ability of parliamentary committees to scrutinise the bills which may result in rushed legislation

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Hassan Omar Hassan, a commissioner with the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR).

Nile-CoM happy with progress

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

MINISTERS in charge of water affairs within the Nile Basin region are have expressed satisfaction with the performance of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI).

Representatives from Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda met for the 19th ordinary Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) meeting in Nairobi, under the theme: The Nile Basin – An imperative for Cooperation and listed development in power interconnections, agriculture and watershed management as some of the key areas where success has been realized.

The Republic of South Sudan participated as observer.

Members endorsed the NBI Work Plan aimed at institutional strengthening for the period July 2011 to December 2012 with a budget of USD 14,440,827.

Also endorsed is the establishment of a Reserve Fund and other resource mobilization efforts so as to continue with the implementation of NBI projects and programs.

Kenya's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta congratulated the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) for implementing programs and projects that have created trust and confidence among communities and states of the Nile Basin.

He underscored the role of NBI in developing climate change mitigation measures which can be integrated into the national policies of NBI Member States to overcome the frequent occurrence of droughts and floods and the resultant food insecurity, among others.

Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta revealed that through its new constitution, the government of Kenya has given prominence to the management of shared waters as a sign of its commitment to the sustainable management and development of shared water resources without causing any significant harm to neighbouring countries, as required by inter-

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with weak provisions.

"We might end up with poor quality legislations that are inconsistent with the constitution," argues Hassan Omar Hassan, a commissioner with the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR).

He says that legislative delays may lead to the creation of weak institutions due to insufficient understanding of salient issues, interference by the bitter political competition between PNU and ODM camps and spirited efforts of anti-reform elements in the national assembly to derail implementation of the new constitution.

"Anti reformers are at work mis-educating or misinforming Kenyans on what the Constitution says. Perceptions of devolution as 'majimbo' may leave citizens vulnerable to manipulation by political leaders and ethnic violence," he adds.

The commissioner says that most ministries are now turning themselves into commissions to beat the Constitutional provision of not more than 22 Ministries.

"An example is the splitting into three of the Commissions under the Kenya National Human Rights and Equality Commission (KNHREC) to formulate the Ombudsman Commission Bill, 2011, the Kenya National Human Rights Bill, 2011 and the National Gender Commission Bill," he explains. He argues that the work between the KNCHR and the newly created commissions under article 59 may create room for conflict among the commissions.

Further, the Labour Court Bill, 2011 also tries to propel the current judges into new positions without the necessity of some public examination and assurance that they meet the requirements and standards set by the Constitution. Mr Omar now wants Kenyans to be vigilante to ensure that anti-reformers do not derail the constitutional implementation process.

Non state actors on the other hand feel that the ongoing disjointed efforts are likely to yield laws that are not harmonised. They want Kenyans to speak up and oppose any attempts to undermine the effective implementation of the constitution.

"All Kenyans have a responsibility to ensure that the constitution is implemented in accordance with the provisions provided within it," they add in a joint press release.

The organizations which include The Institute of Social Accountability (Tisa), Centre for Enhancing Democracy and Good Governance (CEDGG), Centre for Human Rights

Agreed timeline for the development of priority bills for the period ending 30th August 2011. To guide relevant institutions including Line Ministries, AG, KLRC, CIC and Parliament.

Bill	Raw draft and policy doc from line Ministry/Institution released to KLRC/AG by	Draft Bill by KLRC/AG released to CIC by	Revised Bill AG/KLRC/CIC/line Ministry/Institution finalized by	Final draft Bill released by AG to Cabinet by	Post-Cabinet consultations where substantive changes are made finalized by	Publication by	Constitutional (Schedule 5) Deadline	Proposed date for enactment by	
Representation & Legislature									
1	Vetting of public appointments by Parliament	30/5/2011	15/6/2011	27/6/2011	26/6/2011	7/7/2011	10/7/2011	One Year (26/8/2011)	15.8.2011
2	Bills relating to legislative structures	15/6/2011	30/7/2011	22/7/2011	25/7/2011	8/8/2011	10/8/2011	2 years (26.8.2012)	25/8/2011
3	IFRC					Published	One Year (26/8/2012)	15.5.2011	
4	Political parties		15/5/2011	23/5/2011	25/5/2011	7/6/2011	9/6/2011	One Year (26/8/2011)	23/6/2011
5	Elections (National & County)		15/5/2011	8/6/2011	12/6/2011	21/6/2011	24/6/2011	One Year (26/8/2011)	8/7/2011
Judiciary & Constitutional Commissions									
6	System of Courts	30/5/2011	15/6/2011	27/6/2011	26/6/2011	7/7/2011	10/7/2011	One Year (26/8/2011)	25/8/2011
7	Salaries & Remuneration Commission						Published	15.5.2011	
8	Article 59 Commissions (3 Bills)		15/5/2011	30/5/2011	3/6/2011	16/6/2011	18/6/2011	One Year (26/8/2011)	3/7/2011
9	Supreme Court				Done (Bill in Cabinet)	15/5/2011	20/5/2011	One Year (26/8/2011)	30/5/2011
10	Public Service Commission	30/5/2011	15/6/2011	28/6/2011	30/6/2011	14/7/2011	14/7/2011		30/7/2011
11	Public Finance Commission for Revenue Allocation	10/4/2011	4/5/2011	18/5/2011	21/5/2011	6/6/2011	8/6/2011	3 months (26/11/2011)	22/6/2011
12	Independent Offices (Appointment)				Done (Bill in Cabinet)	15.5.2011			30.5.2011
13	Auditor General & Controller of Budget	30/5/2011	15/6/2011	30/6/2011	4/7/2011	18/7/2011	20/7/2011		3/8/2011
14	Public Finance Management	30/5/2011	15/6/2011	30/6/2011	4/7/2011	18/7/2011	20/7/2011	2 Years (26/8/2012)	3/8/2011
Public Service & Leadership									
15	Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission	15/5/2011	30/5/2011	14/6/2011	17/6/2011	1/7/2011	2/7/2011	One Year (26/8/2011)	16/7/2011
16	Ethics and Leadership	15/5/2011	30/5/2011	14/6/2011	16/6/2011	30/7/2011	2/8/2011	2 Years (26/8/2012)	16/8/2011
Bill of Rights & Citizenship									
17	Citizenship		16/7/2011	28/7/2011	31/7/2011	9/8/2011	11/8/2011	One Year (26/8/2011)	25/8/2011
18	Ratification of International Treaties	10/6/2011	10/7/2011	24/7/2011	27/7/2011		7/8/2011		21/8/2011
Executive and Security Sector									
19	Power of Mercy	30/6/2011						One Year (26/8/2011)	
20	Independent Police Oversight Authority		30/6/2011	13/7/2011	16/7/2011	30/7/2011	2/8/2011		16/8/2011
21	National Police Service		15/6/2011	30/6/2011	14/7/2011	28/7/2011	30/7/2011	2 years (26/8/2012)	14/9/2011
22	NSS		11/7/2011	14/8/2011	16/8/2011	30/8/2011	2/9/2011	2 Years (26/8/2012)	16/9/2011
23	National Police Service Commission		22/5/2011	6/6/2011	8/6/2011	21/6/2011	23/6/2011	2 years (26/8/2012)	7/7/2011
Devolved Government									
24	Bills relating to devolved government							Between one and two years	
25	Urban Areas and Cities	15/6/2011	30/6/2011	14/7/2011	16/7/2011	28/7/2011	30/7/2011	One Year (26/8/2011)	14/8/2011
Land and Environment									
26	National Land Commission	30/5/2011	15/6/2011	30/6/2011	4/7/2011	18/7/2011	20/7/2011	18 months (26.3.2012)	3/8/2011

and Civic Education (CHRCE), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ-Kenya) and the Transparency International say that forces of impunity are determined to use all means at their disposal to protect themselves

from accountability.

They also note that the Constitution clearly outlines the tasks of the various levels of government.

"However, the insistence by some government quarters that the provin-

cial administration should be retained is a demonstration of unfortunate conservatism in some government quarters intent on maintaining the status quo and seeking to derail the reform process. Such calls are out of step

with the reform demands of the time and should be ignored," adds the statement.

Among issues that require immediate attention include the enactment of the Elections Bill, Political Parties Bill and the Ethics and Anti Corruption bill. "With 2012 elections fast approaching, three other key laws namely Elections Bill, Political Parties Bill and the Ethics and Anti Corruption bill are yet to be debated upon. Without these laws, the new electoral body will remain toothless and ineffective," reads the press release in part.

Other salient issues include proposals that may see the establishment of too many structures which may require introduction of new checks and balances to ensure accountability and provide a foundation for a sustainable economy.

Further devolution has continued to be a sticky area as Kenya's constitution implementation process unfolds. Several legislations governing devolution are still pending despite the August deadline. Another emerging concern is the unhealthy competition between government institutions which is likely to result in discordant and inconsistent laws.

There is also the issue of a looming crisis in the public sector as government staff transit from present institutions to the new institutions under the new Constitution of Kenya. This process needs to be handled transparently, fairly and effectively to ensure county governments do not inherit mismatched or bloated workforces.

The Task Force on Devolved Government has proposed the formation of an independent, lean but effective transition agency to deal with the county transition including the transfer of staff and assets.

There is also concern that vested interests of ministries to be directly affected by devolution will undermine the veracity of the Task Force on Devolved Government (TFDG) report. There is also the risk that the TFDG report will be watered down or ignored in subsequent policy and legislation.

Also the emerging cost of county governments in the advent of formation of the county institutions calls for an urgent need to harmonize government salaries to avoid a scenario where service delivery is completely undermined and the counties are further immersed into debt.

However, it is expected that once the Salaries and Revenue Commission comes into force, the exorbitant parliamentary salaries will be rationalized to conform to the public service standards.

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national law.

The 19th Nile-COM meeting announced rotation in the chairmanship of the Nile-COM from Ethiopia's Minister of Water and Energy, Hon. Alemayehu Tegen to Kenya's Minister of Water and Irrigation, Hon. Charity Ngilu effective July 2011 for one year.

It is a tradition within NBI to rotate this position on an annual basis among Member States in alphabetical order (Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda).

The in-coming Nile-COM Chair, Hon. Charity Kaluki Ngilu stressed the importance of establishing a permanent Nile River institution to safeguard the gains made so far and to steer the basin to the next level. "In this regard, there is a sense of urgency to conclude the out-

Nile-COM happy with progress

standing issues within the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) to ensure that all the basin states are on board", she said. Ms. Ngilu said as the Chairperson of the Nile-COM, she will focus on real issues affecting the citizens of the Nile Basin.

She cited climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy; food security; management and conservation of catchments areas; as well as mobilizing the communities within the basin states to rally behind efforts of the Nile-COM among priority areas.

This is in addition to addressing issues raised by Egypt and Sudan with regard to the CFA signing and its legal and institutional implications.

The Ministers agreed to convene an extra-ordinary Nile-COM meeting to discuss the CFA signing and its legal and institutional implications as requested by Egypt and Sudan during the 18th Nile-COM meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in June 2010. As part of the agenda, the Extra-ordinary meeting will also discuss the position of South Sudan as a potential member of the NBI.

Earlier, the outgoing Nile-COM Chairperson, Hon. Tegen underscored the need for cooperation to help address threats and challenges that the Nile Basin region has continued to face, particularly extreme climatic and weather conditions, natural resources degradation as well as food insecurity.

The Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat, Dr. Wael Khairy said NBI is implementing several projects in natural resources management and power interconnection in the Nile region to complement national interventions with aim of contributing to sustainable socio-economic development in the Nile region.

Water resources development is of great importance to NBI Member Countries in as far as it enables them meet their development objectives.

Among other things, water resources development will contribute to increased access to reliable and cheap electricity, increased food security and productivity and increased protection

and management of the environment as a basis for livelihoods of the basin populations. NBI is assisting member countries overcome the above challenges through its three core functions of: Building Cooperation, Water Resources Management and Water Resources Development.

Under 'Building Cooperation', NBI provides a platform upon which Member States can negotiate issues of water management and development.

Under Water Resources Management, NBI provides analytical tools and a shared information system that will enable monitoring and the sustainable management of the basin while under Water Resources Development, NBI assists its members to identify development opportunities, prepare projects and seek investments.

Concerns raised over dismal academic performance in Busia

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

AN education official in Busia District is calling for concerted efforts in the development of strategies geared towards re-vamping education sector in the area.

Busia Deputy District Education Officer Keranga Msafiri says lack of commitment and negative attitudes by stakeholders in the sector were to blame for the poor academic performance posted by secondary schools in the area.

"The major bottleneck towards the achievement of quality academic performance in the district is none other than strained relationship between the local community and the teachers, rampant absenteeism especially in day schools and laxity on the part of school heads," said Msafiri during a district development committee meeting.

Busia who is also the examination officer says the district managed a mean score of 5.2 in last year's Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination, which was far much below the national standards.

"The performance however accounted for an improvement of 0.2 with Our Lady of Mercy Girls secondary and Saint Mathias Busia secondary schools posting remarkable improvement in the girls and boys categories respectively," the deputy education official said, adding that girls performed exceptionally well in languages but failed to perform satisfactorily in Mathematics and Sciences, a situation he noted has raised a lot of concern.

The education official noted that several challenges including understaffing, poverty and political interference as major attributions to the poor results

"In most learning institutions in the district, the board of directors are in most occasions hand-picked by local politicians who have nothing to do with the management of the schools," said Busia District Poverty Eradication Committee (DPEC) chairman Peter Wandera adding that that most school management committees concentrate only on infrastructure development instead of laying strong foundation that will improve performance.

Wandera at the same time took issue with the district education office saying the quality assurance and standards personnel should regularly monitor teachers who he accused of engaging in various income generating activities at the expense of education.

However, the Deputy District Education Officer assured the stakeholders that the department has taken corrective measures to reverse the situation.

Othaya School closed for lack of students

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

A SCHOOL in Othaya has been shut down indefinitely due to poor enrolment rates.

The school, Kebebero Secondary School, was closed for lack of enough students to attract any support from the government.

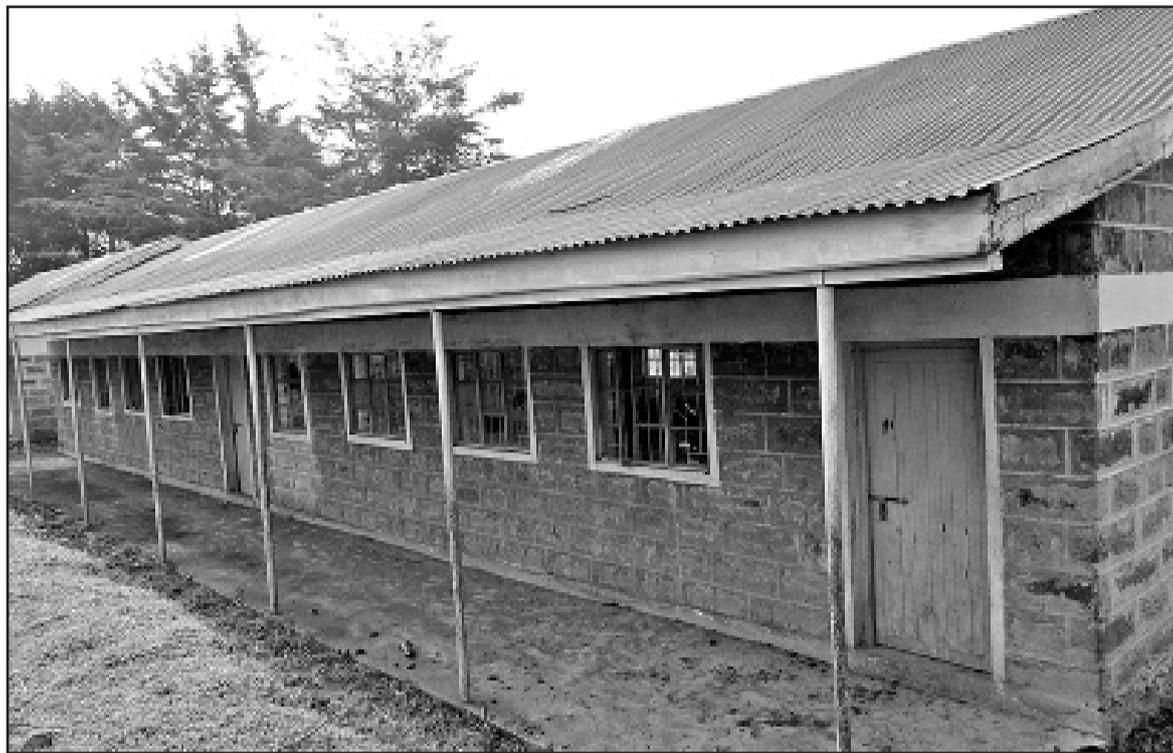
The school started in 2006 had enrolled only ten students but parents later withdrew them and the school had to be closed even before it was registered

Now, thousands of shillings worth of projects are lying idle at the school after the closure. The projects had been built by parents of the neighbouring Ihuririo Primary School to facilitate the learning of Home science subject, but later converted into classes to serve the secondary school.

The desolate school has become a grazing ground for cows with the stone-made classes and offices becoming obsolete.

Mr Paul Nyogote whose daughter Mary Wangechi was the first to be admitted in the school says that he was forced to transfer his child when other parents withdrew theirs leaving only six students.

Area resident Mr Francis Mwangi says that a feasibility study should



Permanent classes of Kabebero Secondary School in Othaya which was closed four years ago for lack of students. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

have been conducted at the school before undertaking the enormous task to find out whether the community had many children to sustain the school.

"The school was unable to attract

any significant number of students because the area is served by an additional three secondary schools which are located less than five kilometers apart," said the headmaster of the neighbouring Ihuririo Prima-

ry School Mr Kamotho Gachuhi.

In less than five kilometers radius, there are Ihuririo, Kairuthi and Kihuri secondary schools.

The headmaster says that it will take years to get enough students for the school because even his school has less than 40 pupils per class who will obviously get enrolled to other schools.

However, some parents feel that politics might have taken centre stage. The neighbouring Ihuririo Youth Polytechnic also suffered a similar predicament after the institutions closed down two years ago for lack of students.

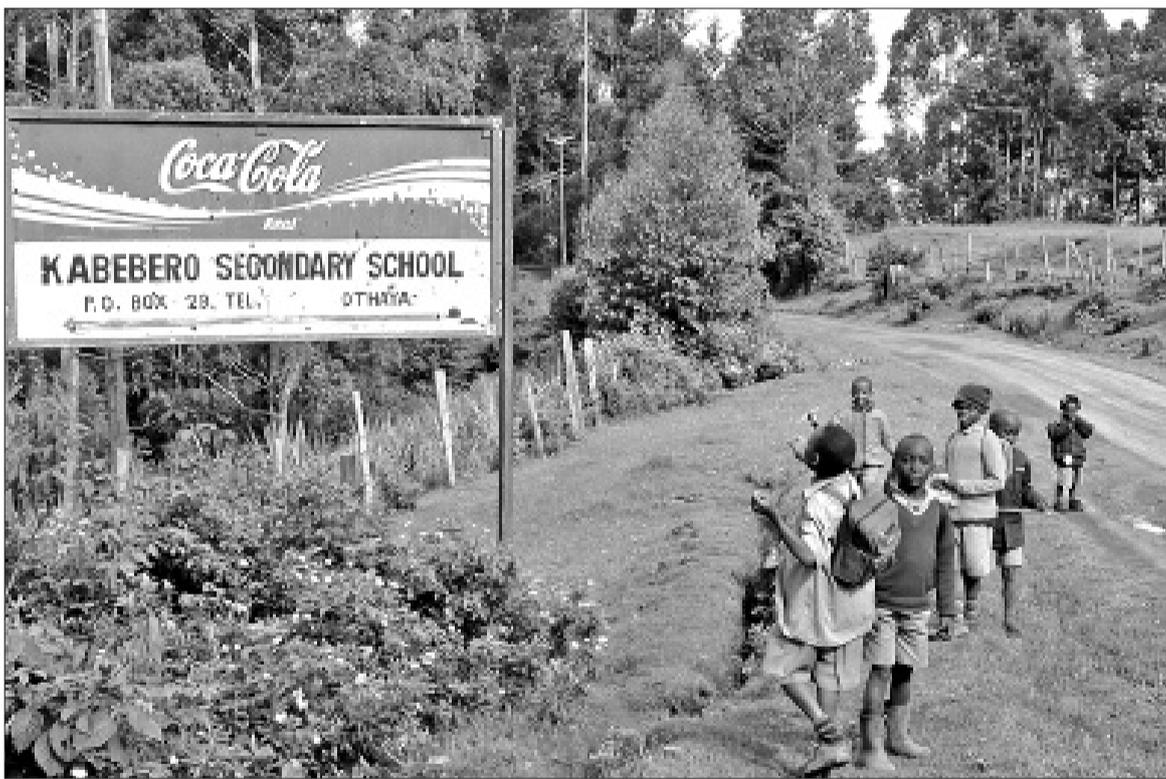
Despite funding from LATF, CDF and even well wishers, the project is no longer operational.

It has now been turned to a police post.

Area DC who is also the chairman of District Education Board David Koskei says that it is only when they will get enough students that they will be able to revive the institutions.

"We have no alternative since there is lack of students. Until the community can produce enough students to enroll in the schools, then the projects will remain under-utilized," said the DC.

Othaya has 33 public secondary schools and 76 public and private public primary schools.



Pupils of the neighbouring Ihuririo Primary School play outside the gate of Kabebero Secondary School in Othaya which was closed four years ago for lack of students. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Kilifi residents decry high school dropout rate

By BEKADZO TONDO

ABOUT 53 percent of pupils who sit for their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in Kilifi District drop out of school every year.

The district deputy education officer Mr. Simon Mogendi says that only 47 percent of the KCPE candidates are able to proceed to secondary schools.

Mr. Mogendi says the transition rates in the area were shockingly low and urged parents to take education of their children seriously.

The officer made the remarks at Lutsangani secondary school in

Chonyi Division during the school annual general meeting and prize giving day.

Mr. Mogendi says the government has moved in to ensure all the children sitting for the KCPE manage to join secondary school.

He said that plans are underway to establish more secondary schools to absorb the high number of children who drop out of school due to lack of enough schools to accommodate them.

The officer praised Bahari CDF for building nine new secondary schools in Chonyi division, through the support of the community.

Mr. Mogendi said the new schools will absorb children from poor families who can not travel long distances to join boarding schools.

Former Permanent Secretary Mrs. Rachael Dzombo who is also a board member of the school said there was need to make Lutsangani mixed secondary school a single sex to enable it do better in national examinations.

Mrs. Dzombo suggested that the newly built Ngombeni secondary school which is to serve as a center of excellence in Bahari constituency be made a girls school.

The former PS said the process

will ensure all the girls from Lutsangani mixed secondary school get transferred to Ngombeni.

Parents in the school complained of low performance by schools in the area and demanded that non performing teachers be removed from the affected schools.

Nominated councilor Grace Mboja complained that a significant number of girls drop out of school due to early pregnancies.

She said education was prerequisite to both boys and girls and urged the government to punish parents who marry off their school going children.

In defense of the provincial administration

COMMENT

By DR. OBUYA BAGAKA

DEBATE on the future of the Provincial Administration (PA) must be separated between the institution itself and what it does from past, current or future personalities that will manage it.

The fear of the PA is largely an elite power conflict between the institution and the elected representatives or those aspiring for leadership positions.

While ordinary citizens fathom its relevance, Provincial Administration past power relations with elected officials largely informs the debate around its dissolution.

PA's hatred is therefore largely historical. While history offers us good lessons, we MUST not be stuck in the past to ignore the critical role of the PA.

Article 132 (3) (b) and 132 (4) empowers the President to direct and coordinate

ministerial functions and establish offices.

Article 189 (1) requires each level of government to perform its function and exercise its powers, assist, support and consult the other level of government. Both governments are to liaise with each other in respect to sharing of information, coordinating policy and administration and enhancing capacity.

Article 191 (2) outlines specifics of when National legislation prevails over county legislation. In fact, Clause (3) basically outlines a job description for the future PA at the county level. Clause 3 state the duties of the national government by

ensuring national unity is not breached, promote economic cohesion, protect the markets, promote equal opportunity & environmental protection.

Under the devolved system national government will continue to be represented at the county level. National government will have two roles at the County level to directly perform those function assigned to it by the constitution and exercise oversight role for those function it will delegate to the county administration as provided by law.

The constitution provides the geographical and functional demarcation between the national and county government. Underneath this demarcation is an administrative structure – Intergovernmental relations.

Implementing a constitution is more than assigning tasks between levels of gov-

ernment. Most public service defy constitutional demarcations such as security, education, health, gambling etc.

Currently members of PA serve as inter-ministerial liaisons, coordinate government business public programs at the local level. Manage security organs in the field and manage government staff deployed in the field.

A close scrutiny on the challenges experienced by both Ghana and Uganda reveal hiccups caused by central bureaucrats who refuse to delegate resources and finances for fear of loss of control.

The future of PA based on these experiences will be to continue serving as inter-ministerial liaison for national and delegated functions to avoid Ghana or Uganda's experiences.

The PA will also create the link between county and

national government. While some governors will not have problems running their counties, they will encounter problems dealing with national bureaucrats answerable to Nairobi

A county administrator will be instrumental in bridging this interface. A reconstituted PA should have a County Administrator – based at the county level, in-charge of district/constituency administrators.

The role of chiefs in-charge of wards/locations must be made answerable to the governor

You can call the Provincial Administration as a “colonial evil”, but remember, it is the “necessary evil” required to ensure smooth running of both the central and County governments’ policies at the local level.

The writer is a senior official at the Kenya Institute of Administration.

State urged to promote use of Kiswahili

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

POOOR skills in Kiswahili among Kenyans have been identified as a major hindrance to ongoing efforts to promote the language.

The Director of Research Institute of Swahili Studies (RISS-EA), Mr. Kassim Omar, has expressed concern that many Kenyans do not appreciate the language that has been wrongly associated with mediocrity and the ‘uneducated’.

He says identifying Kiswahili as a national language may not be adequate, and extra efforts should be directed towards promoting the use, including embracing parliamentary and other public discourse in the language.

Another setback has been the ‘Sheng’ culture where a generation prefers to speak in the ghetto dialect instead of speaking the national language.

“Even the media that is expected to promote Swahili use in their publications use ‘sheng’ and so how do we expect the readers to learn the language when institutions that set the national agenda fail in this important mandate,” he posed.

The official said even advertisements in the mass media are broadcast or published in English language and use ‘Sheng’ to entice the largely youthful population.

Omar says Swahili is one



Set of school text books. Photo/File

of the most respected languages around the world, with Europeans enrolling in East African Swahili institutions to learn the language.

Speaking at the centre, the director urged parents to introduce the language to children at an early age in place of English.

“A big percentage of children especially in urban towns, learn words in English language even before they

start pre-unit classes. But unfortunately, they cannot converse in Swahili,” he said.

He said some youth “would rather be caught dead than speak the Swahili language.”

The official suggested that schools set aside special days in the week for students to speak in Swahili to increase knowledge and grasp of the language.

He said some professionals frowned upon the language in

favour of English in elite social circles, he says.

Even in coast region where the Swahili culture and language originated, its use is still poor, the scholar says.

As the youth avoid using Swahili, the language has turned into one of the most poorly performed subjects in schools.

In last year's Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination,

performance in the subject that is widely spoken across the country was so poor that a shocked Minister for Education, Prof. Sam Ongeru, authorized research to unearth the cause of the poor results.

The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) results revealed that girls performed better than boys in languages, while boys did well in other subjects.

Other than being among the two national languages, Kiswahili is among five others used by the African Union, and is recognized by the United Nations.

And despite the challenges the country was experiencing, the language is spoken by over 150 million people across the globe.

Mr. Omar says the mandate of the institution is to research on Swahili culture and lifestyle and seek to educate Kenyans on their findings.

The language has 13 dialects, one of which is examinable. It has a rich culture depicted in art, food and dance.

The institute is associated with Fort Jesus as it was part of the military landscape during the colonial era. The Swahili language and culture has become a major tourist attraction in the coastal town.

“Lately, the institution has delivered Swahili programmes and lectures to interested students in order to popularize the use of the language in the institutions,” he said.

Don wants schools equipped with means to detect disabilities

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE government has been petitioned to equip teachers with capacity to detect a wide range of both verbal and physical disabilities among school children.

Dr Robert Maneno from Pwani University says most teachers have no capacity of identifying unique disabilities among children due to lack of special training.

Dr Maneno said there was need for teachers to be equipped with adequate knowl-

edge to enable them to easily detect such disabilities.

He made the remarks during a two day conference on Impact of Social Change organized by the UN convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at Pwani University.

The international conference brought together scholars from different countries including Zimbabwe, South Africa, Malawi and Kenya as the hosts.

Dr Maneno whose research focused on communication disorders in primary schools, said

there was need to include children with disabilities in regular classes or in special units.

He said currently many schools did not have special learning for the physically challenged children in the country thus denying them their educational rights as stipulated in the Kenyan new constitution.

The researcher said physically challenged children can prosper in some education fields if empowered to do so and that was the reason why the government has an obligation to train teachers and be able to

discover the disabilities facing many children.

"Children identified with severe and profound speech sound disorder should be trained in other forms of communication such as sign language and bliss symbols," said Dr Maneno.

Dr Maneno also recommended that the ministry of health and that public health and sanitation to have their medical personnel offer antenatal clinic advises and guide mothers to reduce the occurrence of disabilities in their first born.

Culture, religion still keeping girls out of school

By TITUS MAERO

ABOUT 1.5 million children are still out of school in different parts of the country despite the introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Programme.

Health Minister Anyang Nyong'o says that girls account for the majority adding that the poorest participation rate is recorded in the North Eastern province that has registered a paltry 15 per cent as enrolment of girls.

He however blamed historical, cultural and religious convictions as having kept the girl child out of school even after the introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme in the year 2003.

Speaking during a funds drive in aid of Kerongo Secondary School in Vihiga Constituency, the lawmaker observed that to correct the anomaly in girls education, the government should allocate enough bursary, to support needy cases in semi arid areas.

Nyong'o asked educationists to implement policies which address the factors promoting gender inequality and low school participation not only among the girls but also their male counterparts.

He said that it is the human resource of a nation that determines the character and pace of the country's social and economic development, noting that teachers play a vital role in turning the nation's wheel of development.

The legislator said educated population participates in economic activities which translate into higher living standards with the overall effect being reduction of poverty among the Kenyan people in general.

Nyong'o noted that it is from this realization of the critical role that education plays in national development that the government has attached great importance to the education sector as reflected in the various policy documents.

He cited the Ominde Commission report that led to the enactment of the education act in 1968 to guide in the management of education together with the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) act of 1967.

All counties to get public varsity, says Mwiria

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology has mooted a plan that seeks to ensure that every County has a public university in the next two years.

Assistant Minister Kilemi Mwiria says that the Ministry is currently working out implementation modalities with the Commission for Higher Education to make sure that provision of quality education is not compromised at initial phase.

The Assistant Minister says that the government will ensure provision of adequate facilities to guarantee proper learning.

He spoke during a function to commission of the proposed Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) University.

Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams who presided over the function at Kanyambora, in Mbeere North District underscored the need for politicians to preach peace ahead of the elections to help create a conducive environment for learning and development.

He said that politicians must refrain from making reckless utterances in the build to the next General Elections to avoid a repeat of the ugly incidents that characterized the 2007 General Elections.

The Archbishop said that politicians must strive to find lasting solutions to problems afflicting the masses to help nurture peace and reconciliation.

"In the United Kingdom, we too have tribes but we have channeled our energies to development of the country," he said.

He said that Kenyans should turn their energies to revamping the economy and cited the Anglican University which could become an instrument of peace and reconciliation as it will unite communities as a melting point for learning.

"Science belongs to all human beings, it does not matter the tribe, race, religion or culture and thus we should encourage students to be strong pillars of reconciliation.

Siakago MP Lenny Kivuti



University of Nairobi fountain.

said that the four institutions on the land, including Kanyambora Primary and Secondary schools, Kanyambora Technical Institute and St John's ACK church will be integrated into the University.

The institution will be marketed to admit students from across East Africa and is expect-

ed to admit the first students in September this year.

Mr Kivuti offered to provide services in Surveying and developing the campus master plan to ensure the land is utilized in optimum manner. He said the decision to hand over the land to the institutions building committee

was arrived at following the approval by the District Education Board and the Mbeere County Council who held land in trust.

The university is expected to transform the sleepy market into an economic hub by opening opportunities in agriculture, business and employment.

Vihiga MP calls for more investment in education

By TITUS MAERO

THE increased enrolment rates at all levels of education will impact negatively on performance in schools unless the government invests in the development of infrastructure.

Vihiga MP Yusuf Chanzu says that the surge of students due to the Free Primary Education (FPE) and the subsidized secondary education had led to increased students population who over stretched physical facilities and crowded classrooms. Chanzu said such challenges

have had a negative effect on the quality of education offered. "In order to address the high turn out of students in schools the government must urgently invest in infrastructure development in the learning institutions," he adds.

He, however, says the newly developed school mapping which involves Geographical Information System (GIS) by the Ministry of Education would assist in identifying the needy regions for prompt intervention.

Addressing students of Kerongo Secondary School in Vihiga District, the legislator also asked

the government to integrate Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) into the basic education curriculum with a view to improving its management, increase access and enhance the retention levels.

The lawmaker underscores the need to develop a new curriculum to ensure quality and relevance of ECD education and training in line with vision 2030, which is the country's economic blue print.

He urged the Ministry of Education to influence development of curricula that is geared towards addressing the changing market

needs especially in the wake of Information Communication Technology (ICT).

Chanzu, at the same time, lauded the government's Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) which had converted some schools to centres of academic excellence and which also addresses recruitment of teachers on internship programme.

He says the programme is timely as it aims at upgrading infrastructural facilities and improving the quality of education required in the labour market.

Kakamega teachers desert their Sacco

By JOEL JUMA

OVER 600 teachers have withdrawn from a cooperative society in Kakamega County after they failed to meet a new threshold set by the government to qualify for loans.

The members opted to pull out of the Kakamega Teachers savings and credit cooperative society (Kateco) because they could not get loans from their investments. The members were barred from getting loans following a government's directive that a member of a society retains two thirds of his or her salary on the payslips.

Kateco Chairman Joseph Sagalla and Treasurer David Moyia said the rule got many members unawares with some opting to sell their remaining shares in order to quit the cooperative movement. "Some members have defaulted in their loan repayment schedules and we are now attaching their guarantors share in order to recover the society's money," said Sagalla. The officials were speaking at Kakamega Primary School during members education day.

Mumias District Cooperative Officer Staunlaus Ambani and the Kenya national union of teachers (knut) Kakamega Central branch Chairman Robert Opwora also addressed the meeting. The society Chief Executive officer Peter Vuhya said that over Kshs1.06 billion has been advanced to members.

He said during the meeting that over Kshs7 million has been disbursed as school fees loans while another Kshs470 million was given out for development programmes to the members last year. Moyia explained that Kateco was adjusting its operations in order to comply with the new legislations in the cooperative sector. He said that laws have opened doors to have societies borrow money from each other at reduced rates to avoid their reliance on commercial banks.

PS speaks on status of education in Othaya

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

LACK of commitment by teachers in Othaya is a major challenge affecting the delivery of quality education in the area.

Public Works PS Mr John Lonyangapuo while speaking during the Nyeri South Education Day at Othaya Catholic Hall notes that situation has been aggravated by weak management systems in most learning institutions and indiscipline cases which result from non-commitment by parents and other stakeholders.

"Poor syllabus coverage, lack of teachers, non commitment of some BoG and PTA members, unmaintained physical facilities and below average performances are also other challenges affecting the delivery of quality education," said the PS.

However, Lonyangapuo said the Government is undertaking several measures to address these challenges both at national, provincial and district levels.

"These intervention measures include disbursement of grants to secondary schools for laboratory, grants for schools in pockets of poverty districts, Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASALS) districts and free day secondary education, infrastructure and support learning materials," he added.

Other measures include the introduction of Economic Stimulus Programme, Economic Recovery strategy for national schools, Information Communication Technology (ICT),

constituency Bursary Funds (CBF), the most vulnerable children in selected primary schools and Homegrown schools feeding programme.

"These huge investments together with other investment programmes in schools require good management and transparent accountability for all. To address the challenges in management of schools infrastructure and other public funds, the ministry has trained BoGs and School Management Committees in all primary and secondary schools selected as centres of excellence and national schools," Lonyangapuo added.

Those present during the function

included area DEO Mr Jackson Kaberia and KNUT Nyeri branch treasurer Mr James Kanyugo.

The Government is also addressing issue of shortage of teachers through the ongoing reforms mainly targeting to re-align the education sector with the new constitution.

KNUT Nyeri branch treasurer Mr James Kanyugo urged the Government to pay the remaining 20 per cent of their salary increment proposal by the end of this month.

He said the teachers are eagerly waiting for the ongoing negotiations on the review of house allowances, commuter and medical allowances.



TOP: Public Works PS Mr John Lonyangapuo (left) and Nyeri South DEO Mr Jackson Kaberia present a certificate to the principal of Mahiga Girls Secondary School, Mrs Mary Wang'ombe, during the Nyeri South Education Day at Othaya Catholic Hall. LEFT: Othaya Boys High School march past the guests during the function.

Photos/Joseph Mukubwa

Mudavadi in search of needy students in Sabatia

By TITUS MAERO

THE Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Musalia Mudavadi has asked the provincial administration to assist in identifying poor but bright students in his Sabatia constituency so that they can benefit from the bursary fund.

Mudavadi said the provincial administration can use its vast network in carrying out identification exercises especially in far flung areas which cannot be easily reached by CDF officials handling bursary kitty.

He said the concept of bursary had proved a big success noting that it had assisted many needy students who pass their national examinations to continue with further education in both colleges and Universities.

Speaking at the Ikhovero Secondary School, where he issued cheques worth millions of shillings as bursary to various schools in the area, the Local Government Minister said the government has been making considerable effort to provide every child with quality education.

Mudavadi said this has been achieved through the introduction of Free Primary School Education (FPE) programme, which he said, is also part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) support in secondary tuition and provision of bursary funds.

The Legislator, however, said there are barriers to the provision of quality education, which include lack of a realistic teacher to student ratio and infrastructure that meets the needs of students and the teaching staff.

Nonetheless, he added that in spite of the achievements in education sector, poverty and population increase have further complicated and hindered the achievement of positive education outcome among the learning institutions.

The lawmaker asked the teaching fraternity to focus on ways of creating investment in education to help reduce illiteracy rates.

Mudavadi called upon the community and teachers in Sabatia constituency to also identify ways of giving support to government programmes for sports, scholarships, in service training for teachers and provision of books, uniforms and food.

Build national schools in all counties -teachers

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government should establish a national school in each County to curb congestions in the existing 18 national schools, the Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Teachers Association (KSSHA) has said.

The Association also faulted the MPs for channeling funds meant to establish Centres of Excellence to un-popular schools after being awarded the Kshs30

million under the government sponsored Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP).

"Some MPs decided to start new schools instead of upgrading the existing facilities," said the association's Western branch chairman Kahi Indimuli.

Indimuli and the Kenya Union of Post Primary Education of Teachers (Kuppet) National Vice Chairman Zadock Kisienya said that the grants were taken to wrong

schools in some constituencies.

Indimuli was speaking at Kakamega high school during the Form One selection exercise. Charles Ngaira, a Deputy Director in the ministry of Education in charge of grants and infrastructure said the stakeholders should not blame the Government over the few chances in the national schools.

Ngaira explained that the Government had disbursed over

Kshs6 billion under the Economic Stimulus Programme to assist in the construction of model schools and reduce congestion in national schools.

"We want every constituency to have an academic centre but others have decided not to expand the existing schools," said Ngaira.

Ngaira said the Government was still resolving disputes over the mode used in choosing the Centres in some constituencies.

Charcoal traders in conservation exercise

By KAVYU-KURA

BUSINESSMEN involved in the multi-million charcoal business in Mwingi have launched a Kshs 3 million initiative to conserve the environment by planting trees.

The larger Mwingi district charcoal transporters association kicked off the tree planting programme in early July, by planting seedlings in various sites including the Mwingi GK prison, several primary school and chiefs camps.

The association's chairman Joseph Kimwele told reporters at the launch of the projects that by this December, the organization would have planted and nurtured at least 20,000 trees to maturity at the cost of Kshs3 million.

Kimwele who was flanked by his secretary Stephen Mburu and treasurer Lenah Mulyungi said the tree planting exercise was mooted in line of the Forest Act that legalizes charcoal burning but demands that the business should be carried out in an environment friendly environment

"We are taking this exercise seriously because we know the extent of degradation that has been caused to the environment over years of wanton felling of trees without replacement. Beside the re-forestation exercise, we will create job opportunities by employing people to water and take good care of the seedlings until they mature," said the chairman.

He said that in order to ensure that the planted trees stood the strongest chance of surviving, his body was planting only indigenous seedlings that would withstand the vagaries of harsh climatic conditions and the current La Nina induced drought in the area.



The Mwingi Central DO Sarah Gichamba addresses members of the charcoal transporters association. Photo by Kavy-Kura

"We have decided to plant indigenous trees because they can survive the harsh climatic conditions and drought. We have established that exotic trees wither and dry up soon after planting," said Kimwele. He added that the tree planting exercise was a continuous exercise that will continue beyond December and intensified at the onset of the rains.

The Mwingi district forest officer John Njoroge who had attended the launching of the tree planting exer-

cise, said the Forest Service Act dictates that charcoal dealers and producers must conserve the environment and must also produce charcoal with zero per cent wastage.

"The act is very clear. There should be no fuel wastage during the production of charcoal. We want the producers, transporters and all persons who deal with charcoal to utilize the resource gainfully while protecting the environment," said Njoroge.

The Mwingi Central District of-

ficer Sarah Gichamba who had also graced the occasion said it was a pleasant surprise that members of a community group had taken upon itself to reclaim the environment without the usual prodding from chief and DOs.

She noted that the destruction of forests for charcoal burning was reaching crisis levels in some parts of Mwingi and thus the tree planting initiative was a most welcome gesture. She pledged supports from local chiefs to make the exercise successful.

Doctor calls for regular medical checkups

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

Nyeri Provincial General Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr. Loise Wagana is urging Kenyans to go for regular screening to allow for early detection of terminal ailments.

Dr Wagana said that Kenyans attend hospitals only when ailing making prevention of diseases difficult.

Speaking at Solio Ranch Settlement Scheme during a free medical camp, Dr. Wagana said many Kenyans ailments could be prevented if detected early adding that late detection only complicates the disease which turns out to be expensive and difficult to manage.

The camp organized by the PGH nurses to mark the Annual Nurses week saw over 1,200 residents screened for various ailments.

"Diabetes, high blood pressure and Asthma are some of the common ailments detected and if not treated early, they develop into serious complications," said Wagana.

She added that those with early symptoms would be referred to the local facilities while those with serious problems taken to the PGH or Kenyatta National Hospital for specialized treatment.

Speaking during the same occasion, Nyeri North Medical Officer of Health Mr Christopher Wang'ang'a said diseases associated with poor sanitation were major problems facing residents of Solio ranch.

He thanked the government for providing accessible health facilities to the residents and clean water to ensure water borne diseases are contained and patients attended to promptly.

Criticism of primary education was unfair

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

A RECENT criticism by members of Kenya Secondary Schools Head Association (KSSHA) on primary education is regrettable.

The criticism although premised on massive wastage of pupils through dropouts and failure to gain admission to secondary school can only be summed up as unfortunate and a threat to the gains made in the education sector.

The report, unveiled during the KSSHA's Conference in Mombasa recently, observes that out of 1.3 million enrolled in standard one following the inception of free learning education in 2003, only 746,080 completed their primary cycle. "An assessment was needed on whether those who dropped out of the system left with skills that could allow them to earn a living," the report, quoted by the Press notes.

The free primary education that the Government introduced in 2003 was one of the greatest milestones in the provision of public education in this country.

The Government introduced it against heavy odds. It aimed at facilitating the fulfillment of the Millen-

nium Development Goals; achieving universal primary education by the year 2015. Crucially, the compulsory primary education aimed at providing the citizens, the basic literacy they needed to effectively participate in the governance through General Elections and formation and consolidation of informed public opinion on the policy challenges that face the country.

As a matter of fact, the goals of an excellent primary education are not to provide specific skills to learners to enable them to earn a living. Rather education at this level, aims at achieving basic literacy and numeracy for all students, as well as establishing foundations in science, geography, history, and other social sciences. Primary education should also ideally provide experience of music and art.

Great thinkers in education also assert that primary education should also introduce children to the larger society.

This involves socialization-the learning of appropriate social behavior and skills while interacting with peers, developing friendships, and respect for those in authority. Whatever other goals, these are the basic goals. Others are secondary, however grave

and urgent they might be.

A successful primary education is that which not only achieves success in teaching children to read, write and basic mathematical skills, although these are essential, but which also creates a harmonious and supportive social environment which encourages children to develop character and personality as well as learn to relate with others.

The strong skills in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic (the traditional 3Rs) that a sound primary education imparts on learners provides the foundation for lifelong learning and further formal education in secondary and university education – for those who continue learning formally. These are the skills that provide the platform to study academic and professional disciplines for those who proceed to secondary and university education. They are also the same skills or aptitudes that provide the basis for study of industrial or vocational education at whatever level-after completion of the primary education cycle or completion of secondary education cycle.

It is misleading for principals to charge primary education with "mass wastage of pupils through dropouts

and failure to gain admission into secondary school."

The average age of pupils who complete standard eight in this country is 15 years. The need for formal employment at this age is zero – in a growing and robust economy.

What most children need at this age is to transit to secondary school and not to look for jobs. The challenge these students pose is for policy makers and opinion leaders to expand secondary school education to absorb those who have the ability and the motivation to secure secondary education. And for those who are unable – to join secondary education, the society ought to have established robust vocational/industrial education and training institutions to provide specific skills that will enable them to earn a living.

We shouldn't mistake the nature and goals of education for training or vocation. Education seeks to provide knowledge, values and desired attitudes. Training provides skills specific to certain jobs, employment or tasks.

Education provides the tools to enable a person to think, and judge things. Training provides skills that enable someone to conduct certain

operations – like carpentry, plumbing, masonry, knitting and braiding, welding, or doing business.

Which wastage are the principals talking about? Should they not train their minds on how best they can strengthen secondary education to a level where students who complete secondary education cycle are properly prepared for further education and training in tertiary institutions? For the job market? Why do they spend their time in conferences talking about primary education when they should be talking more about the quality of teaching and learning in secondary school? Science and mathematics education is pathetic. Many students in high school don't do well in these disciplines. Yet these are the disciplines students need to join diploma and degree courses that promise irreparably damages students' job prospects in the labour market.

It is time we stopped demonizing Kenya Certificate of Primary Education and concentrated on improving the quality of education at every tier of our educational system – Early Childhood Development (ECD) Primary, and Secondary as well as University education.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

New electoral commissioners ought to be beyond reproach

THE next general elections, which will be much bigger than the last one, is just a few months away, if recent assurance by President Kibaki is anything to go by. And we have no reason to treat his words with a pinch of salt now that he has signed into law the much-unanticipated Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Act.

As we have argued elsewhere in this paper, Kenyans desire to resolve the longstanding issues that stoked the fierce fires of the infamous post-election violence of 2007/8, needs no gainsaying. We say without any fear of contradiction that the enactment of the boundaries act marks the beginning of the fulfillment of that mighty desire. No Kenyan in his right mind would like to see the country go so dangerously close to the precipice of uncivil war.

We reiterate that the enactment of this Act has set in motion the most crucial process in the management of the electoral reforms as outlined in Article 88 of the Constitution. It sets the stage, pace and benchmarks for streamlining the hitherto not-to-transparent electoral playing field.

For instance, the Act provides for the establishment of an authoritative and independent electoral body unlike the defunct Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) that was at the beckon of the powers that be of the Kanu eras and the stormy first Kibaki Reich. Section 26 of the Act is explicit that the Commission is not subject to any other authority except that of the people.

What is more, Section 30 (1) guards against creation of demigods and little Leviathans within the Commission. The Section imposes relatively stiff penalties on the commissioners and employees who act in breach of its edict for self aggrandizements. To be sure, Section 30 (1) states that such offenders are liable to a fine of Kshs1 million or to both. The convict is also banned from hold public office for a period of ten years.

It is this Commission that must create the much-awaited, controversy-ridden 80 new constituencies. It must also put measures in place to ensure that the next year's general elections will pass without leaving Kenya and Kenyans in a shamble like that of the previous general elections. The men and women who will be given the mantle to steer this important Commission ought to be beyond reproach like the proverbial Caesar's spouse.



COMMENTARY

Will there be an end to impunity?

COMMENT

By BETH MAINA

THE nomination of Willy Mutunga and Nancy Baraza as chief justice and deputy chief justice respectively by the Judicial Service Commission has been a watershed for a pro-people leadership in Kenya. By endorsing their nomination the president and prime minister seem to have recognised the aspirations of the Kenyan people. The confirmation by the vetting committee and parliament was indeed a moment that gave the world a chance to experience another Kenya.

The Kenyan people have for a long time struggled for judicial and security institutions that protect their rights and interests, instead, greed and impunity in the leadership bred a system serving only the wealthy and the politically connected. Fortunately, the Kenyan people have known this only too well and have openly shown their indignation at the injustices and impunity in the system. In 2010, for example, they expressed their distrust of the judiciary when a whole 97 per cent of visitors to a judiciary open day said they did not trust the institution to execute justice. Moreover, of those asked in many opinion polls whether they think Mutunga and Baraza are suitable choices for the posts of chief justice and deputy chief justice, nearly 80 per cent have always said yes. In other words, the people believed that Mutunga and Baraza would improve the image of the office.

So, who opposed Mutunga and Baraza and for what reasons? Who among those opposing them on moral grounds can cast the first stone? Should the men of faith continue dragging the country backwards using what they regard as the only family or moral values, even when it has become clear they too break their own values?

Moreover, why has there not been the same depth of public action and condemnation among the men of faith of those who obtain wealth through corrupt means and fraud? Or is it that the men of faith receive huge contributions

for God's work from that ill-gotten money. Remember the public show of wealth by some filthy rich Kenyan politicians out-doing each other during fund raising functions, hoping to garner votes from the religious constituency?

Here, very critical self-reflection is needed. Is it right to be filthy rich when, as Reverend Timothy Njoya would argue, one has not made any invention of the Bill Gates type? When one knows one's wealth is actually taken from the Kenyan people through corruption or fraud? That one has harvested where one did not plant? That one did not plant back where one reaped? What is moral with this type of behavior? Some politicians then cry foul after global justice institutions catch up with them demanding that they answer for their ill-gotten wealth.

The Kenyan people have recently been treated to another drama where millions of tax payer's money has paradoxically been wasted in attempts to protect leaders suspected of instigating the post-election violence in 2007-2008, which left over 1,500 people dead and 300,000 internally displaced. High-powered delegations led by none other than vice president Kalonzo Musyoka and agriculture minister Sally Koskey hopped around the world from capital to capital seeking support to defer the International Criminal Court (ICC) case for the six suspects from The Hague back to Kenya. Meanwhile, thousands of IDPs were still rotting in camps, three years after they exercised the right to vote. During the same period, some of the suspected leaders have been allowed to traverse the country exonerating themselves as men who will emerge from The Hague as heroes. They campaign in a manner likely to ignite violence come the 2012 general elections. What has emerged, however, is

that even as the effort to defer the case to Kenyan courts was championed, there was little evidence of investigations being done by Kenyan security and prosecuting institutions. Indeed, it appears like they expected to be given the same ICC investigative reports to be used as a basis for the prosecution in Kenyan courts.

Back to the nomination of Mutunga and Baraza. Some judges and magistrates had, according to a section of the media, vowed to 'make it hell' should the two be confirmed, saying: 'We cannot be led by a man who is wearing a stud and another who is doing her PhD on "gayism"?'. We are regrouping so we can agree on the best way to protest this decision and if the two principals and parliament endorse the names, then it will be hell for the two.'

The Judicial Service Commission, which nominated them, was accused by other High Court judges of using public interviews to demean the judges who appeared before them and to depict them as incompetent. They said: 'Those interviews were a mere charade. They had predetermined names and all they did was scandalise judges and make them look very incompetent. It is unacceptable and we will protest.' Another judge said Mutunga and Baraza should brace themselves for obstruction from judicial officers. 'If the government accepts that decision of JSC, the judges will know that the government does not support them. The two should be prepared for total non-cooperation from the judges. They will not be hearing cases most of the time. We will hear cases and they will have no control over what we do,' said another judge.

Now that Mutunga and Baraza have been confirmed and are in office, will the judges and magistrates walk their talk or are they going to understand that a new dawn has arrived in Kenya?

Was it a moral issue with Mutunga's ear studs or Baraza's PhD top-



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The Link

Enhancing governance for all

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Nyeri councils' budget beyond their means

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MOST of the local authorities in Nyeri County will run a budget with millions of shillings in deficit.

Nyeri Municipal Council budget for the current financial year has a deficit of Kshs 60 million.

Out of the Kshs 290 million projected income for the year 2011/2012, the council proposes an expenditure of Kshs 350 million.

Nyeri Mayor Mr Joseph Thairu however says the council was ranked position 9 out of the 175 local authorities in the country and was in position 4 out of the 46 municipalities in the country in the evaluation of performance contract of public agencies for the year 2009/2010.

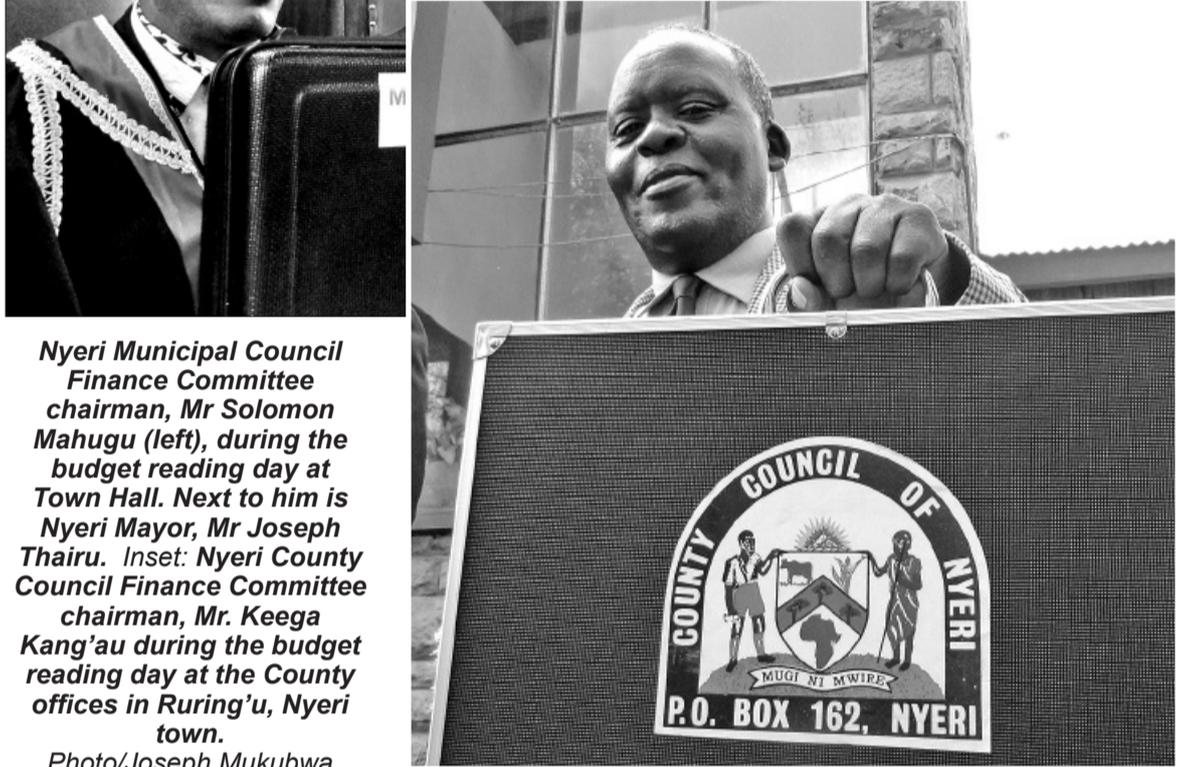
At Nyeri County Council, the council's projected income stands at Kshs 277 million but their expenditure budget amounts to Kshs 331 million which means there is a deficit of Kshs 54 million.

This is according to the Council Finance Committee chairman Mr Keega Kang'au who spoke during the reading of the budget recently at the Council chambers in Ruring'u area.

The council was recognized as the most improved local authority in the country, having moved from position 174 in year 2008/09 to position 20 in performance rankings for the year 2009/2010 according to the Council chairman Mr Wachira Maina Keen.

In Othaya, the Othaya Town Council's budget has a deficit of Kshs 6 million but the chairman Mr Maina Murachu says the council hopes to bridge the gap by strengthening the revenue enhancement measures.

The council intends to raise its income to Kshs 35 million against an expenditure of Kshs 41 million.



Nyeri Municipal Council Finance Committee chairman, Mr Solomon Mahugu (left), during the budget reading day at Town Hall. Next to him is Nyeri Mayor, Mr Joseph Thairu. Inset: Nyeri County Council Finance Committee chairman, Mr. Keega Kang'au during the budget reading day at the County offices in Ruring'u, Nyeri town.

Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

Committee embarks on poverty eradication in Busia

BUSIA District is among sixteen districts in the country slated to benefit from the poverty eradication fund.

According to the District Poverty Eradication Committee chairman Mr Peter Wandera, the area has received Kshs 4 million from the revolving fund kitty for disbursement to the various community interest groups to enable them to undertake the various income generating activities.

"Out of the Kshs.4 million allocation, 10 percent has been set aside for administrative expenses as well as for monitoring and evaluation purposes," said the District Poverty Eradication chairman, adding that the poverty eradication committee is tasked with among other responsibilities ensuring that the loans are issued and that the identified groups engage in viable projects.

The committee chairman said that the committee had received a total of

103 applications of which only 31 have been approved after carrying out thorough vetting in order to ascertain that only needy cases are benefiting from the loan.

He told the stakeholders that Township division which had the highest number of beneficiaries (21 groups) was allocated Kshs 2.4 million whereas Matayos division which had the least number of groups who had qualified for the loan (10 groups) received Kshs1.2 million.

"The criteria employed for loan approval included having a valid registration certificate from the department of social services whereas membership ranged from between 10-30," explained

the poverty eradication committee chairman adding that no collateral was needed.

Wandera at the same time said that the funds were disbursed from the national office on June 3, 2011 adding that the benefiting community interest groups are given a grace period of up to 3 months before they can start repaying the loan at an interest rate of 7percent within a period of twelve months.

The Association of the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK) was identified by the poverty eradication committee as the financial intermediary to oversee the repayment of the loans.

Among the groups that benefitted within the township division included

Busia Township Youth Group which received Kshs.130,000, Nabuhia Nakandi Self Help Group Kshs120,000, Mayenje Dairy Farmers Self Help Group Kshs.100,000, Osiepe Self Help Group Kshs.100,000, Rachuonyo Self-Help Group Kshs.100,000, Wamama Tuinuanne Women Group Kshs.140,000 and Sahani Women Group Kshs.150,000, among others.

In Matayos division, Wekhonye Bulanda group received Kshs160,000, Tuinuanne Upendo Women Group Kshs120,000, Busibwabo Disabled Self Help Group Kshs70,000, Siroba Catchment Women Group Kshs150,000 and Buyende Empowerment Youth Group Kshs140,000, among others.

Kilifi landlords up in arms against high land rates

By BEKADZO TONDO

OVER 800 plot owners in Kilifi Town are planning to oppose the high land rate payments being charged by council.

The plot owners from Mtaani upgrading scheme claim the council has issued notices on outstanding debts that have been backdated to 2004.

Led by the chairman of Sokoni community based organization Mr. Mwalimu Mohamed, they accuse the council of evaluating the cost of residential and commercial plots

based on the current market rates and hiking the fee charged on land rates from Kshs400 for a residential plot to Kshs4,000 while the commercial plot owners are to pay around Kshs6,000 per month.

The chairman further reveals that the council is charging the same rates for plot owners who have not been issued with land title deeds contrary to the council land rates Act.

He says that according to the law, only land owners with title deeds are supposed to pay land rates and won-

dered why the council was contravening the law. Contacted for comment, Kilifi Town clerk, Mr. Ibrahim Jilao, insists that land rates payments were mandatory for any person who owns a plot within the jurisdiction of the town council.

"The council generates most of its revenue from the land rate payments. The revenue raised locally is then used in providing better and quality services to the members of public and therefore land owners have no option but to comply with the new directive,"

said Mr. Jilao. He appealed to the aggrieved parties to seek clarification at the council offices.

However area residents accused the council of poor service delivery despite the punitive levies charged on the residents.

Mr. Mohamed said the residents were getting a raw deal from the council as the town lacked basic necessities such as street lights, proper drainage systems which resulted in floods during the rainy seasons and therefore the council.

UNDP boss tells Africa to speed up regional unity

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

REGIONAL integration remains an ideal option for over two thirds of the world's Least Developed Countries (LDCs), a United Nations official has said.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, Mr. Aeneas Chuma, says the challenges facing African countries include high fragmentation and poor transport infrastructure particularly in Central Africa. Other challenges include a large population of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in private and public sectors.

The UN boss says the benefits of integration far outweigh the challenges as growth and human development will be magnified if accompanied by investment in infrastructure at national and cross border level. "The investments allow people and inputs to move to more productive opportunities, and allow finished goods and services to reach broader markets. There is need to also invest in power, water and communications to enhance competitiveness," he said.

Speaking at a Mombasa hotel during the 2nd Speaker's Roundtable Conference, Mr. Chuma said although Africa has made commendable efforts towards regional integration in recent years, progress has been slow and difficult.

"Regional integration could address disadvantages experienced by land-locked countries and the fragmentation that limits market size and denies economies of scale to many countries," he said. He added expanded integration could also create opportunities for resilience by pooling capacities to respond to vulnerabilities. The official says broader integration and co-operation in complementary sectors would support the regions economic and reinforce broad human development.

"If regional integration provided an impetus to better manage cross border natural resources, this would support the notion of sustainability inherent in the human development paradigm," he said.

The official expresses his organization's commitment to support strategic partnerships to ensure all countries advance in sustainable development.

Embattled Mwingi CDF chair bows out



The outgoing Mwingi North CDF chairman, Eng. Job Mwema Mwangangi in his office. Photo/Kavyu Kura

By KAVYU-KURA

THE embattled Mwingi North Constituency Development Fund (CDF) chairman Job Mwema Mwangangi has resigned from the position he has held over the last three years. He quits as a disgruntled man whose sacrifice and efforts were not appreciated.

"I had a very difficult time and last year I even contemplated resigning because the VP (Kalonzo Musyoka) who is the CDF patron did not defend me when unsavory utterances and actions were directed towards people close to him," said Mwangangi as he announced his departure.

Even as Kalonzo renewed the contracts for the rest of the Fund committee Members, Mwangangi who is a Mechanical Engineer by training said due to the frustration he encountered he asked the VP not to give him back the job.

He cited pressure from his private business as the reason to decline re-appointment.

Consequently, the VP has appointed a catholic priest based in Kabati area in Kitui west-Fr. Sammy Musili to take over from Mwangangi. Mwangangi handed over to the incoming chairman at a brief ceremony at the CDF offices in Mwingi town.

Immediately after taking over, Fr. Musili chaired his initial committee meeting promising to devote himself to cultivate a cordial working relationship with fellow members in order to enable the committee to deliver on their mandate to the people on Mwingi north.

"All you should know is that I declined being re-appointed. However, I had done my best to give guidance to the CDF team and I am proud that we have done a lot including the reduction of theft of

CDF money by up to 90 percent," said Mwangangi when he spoke to the press in a Mwingi hotel.

He pointed that even as he left he was pleased that he had been able to entrench transparency and accountability in the way CDF money was handled.

"It was during my tumultuous tenure that the method of giving out project cheques at public meeting was adopted as a measure of transparency while bursaries only went to deserving needy students," said the outgoing CDF chairman.

A source said that Mwangangi could have been unhappy about people close to the VP who incited Kalonzo against him through claims that he (Mwangangi) was keen to use his position as the head of the CDF to enshrine himself and challenge the VP as the local MP during the coming general election.

Plans to build varsity in revered forest opposed

By BEKADZO TONDO

KILIFI leaders have opposed plans to build a university on parts of Kaya Fungo forest, the world heritage in Kaloleni.

The leaders though their spokesman Mr Joseph Mwarandu have vowed to reject the move to give part of forest land to enable Mombasa polytechnic university college expand its operations in Kaloleni district.

However, Mr. Mwarandu who is a member of Malindi Cultural Association says Kaya elders were not consulted over the matter and demanded to be shown the actual location where the land will be hived off.

He says the university project will only proceed if the land earmarked for the development is not part of the Kaya land. "We have no objection to the project if the land earmarked for the development does not encroach on the shrine used by the Kaya Elders," said Mr Mwarandu.

The site was declared a world heritage and a traditional buffer last year by UNESCO before it was fenced off for its proper conservation.

The Kaya forest is also the biggest among all the Kayas for the Mijikenda community in the coast region. Ganze Mp Francis Baya says it is unfortunate that some local leaders had approved the development without consulting Kaya elders.

"As leaders within Kilifi county we will not sit back and watch as the conservation of Kaya Fungo is destroyed to pave for the establishment of an educational institution," adds Baya.

Talking The Link in Kilifi, Baya who is also an assistant minister for immigration said that as much as residents want institutions of higher learning brought closer to them, proper sites need to be identified.

However Ms Naomi Cidi denied that the project would be put up on the Kaya forest land adding the rumours might deny the area the funds to put up the university.

According to Cidi, the land planned for that project was too far from the shrine and cautioned leaders against politicizing the matter.

National Museum of Kenya has vowed to block the process of carving out part of the shrine land for the university project.

NMK official Mr. Anthony Githito said the planned construction of the university on the Kaya forest land will totally interfere with its conservation programs and urged local leaders to support them to oppose the project.

"Kaya Fungo was gazetted as a World Heritage site by UNESCO last year and it must be protected and any attempts to destroy its stature must be rejected," adds Mr. Githito.

Tobiko told to clean up his department

By JOEL JUMA

THE Director of Public Prosecutions Keriako Tobiko has been challenged to carry out a radical surgery to redeem the image of his department.

Former Justice Minister Martha Karua noted that the judiciary is being improved though vetting of magistrates and judges and argued that it will be Tobiko's task to reform the prosecution section.

"Tobiko should reform his office so that delays in conclusion of cases resulting from lack of evidence and witnesses in courts can come to an end," said Karua.

Karua explained that the Constitution is friendly as it gives room for fair hiring and firing.

"One can be fired without seeking protection from his or her tribe as the Constitution has outlined all the requirements for any decision," said Karua.

She continued: "Tobiko was hired openly and he has a chance to prove to Kenyans that justice will prevail in courts. Prosecution is an important department in the administration of justice."

She said vetting of the police force should be hastened to enable Tobiko get prosecutors who the un-

derstand law.

Karua was speaking in Kakamega while addressing Narc Kenya leaders drawn from Kakamega County.

Councillor Wafula Kuloba and Kakamega County party Secretary Shaban Otenyo accompanied Karua during her meet the people tour that saw her address traders at Kakamega Municipal Market.

Karua explained that police should be vetted as recommended by the Constitution.

She said the Government should also address concerns raised by the Constitution Implementation Commission (CIC).

She said the salaries for the Charles Nyachae led commission should be resolved to avert confusion during the implementation of the Constitution.

Karua also challenged the Government to fast-track formulation of Bills needed for the implementation of the Constitution.

Karua's remarks came as MPs David Were, Wilbur Ottichillo and Ben Washiali blamed the Executive for delays in the implementation of the Constitution.

The three said Parliament was ready to approve the Bills soon after they are tabled in Parliament.



Varsity education is not just about getting employment

THE most tricky assignment I have had to contend with recently is that of advising students on career choice at the university.

The students come for advice while others seek assurance that they made the right decision in career choice.

The dilemma afflicts the straight 'A' students who virtually qualify for nearly all the most competitive courses offered at public universities.

The dilemma is acute for students who get admission but failed to secure the cluster grades that qualify them into courses initially chosen.

It is not easy to offer conclusive advice or assurance to such students. The career, academic or professional success the students expect out of a given choice depends on many factors, including the character, personality and unconscious drives of the student. In fact, the course a student picks is not predictive of what they eventually end up doing years after college.

Every individual is unique. This uniqueness defines the traits and predilections to work, relations and other behaviours.

Multiple nature is a personality-type framework developed by renowned American educator and researcher, Steven Rudolph. It attempts to account for people's natures and personality traits that lead to particular behavioural patterns, especially with respect to their work and learning. The framework helps individuals understand their inner qualities so they can achieve their potential and find success in life.

It is this personal disposition and the unpredictability of life that makes one hesitant to tell the anxious student: "Yes, this course is good for you and this other course is not."

I have been hesitant to advise any student to "opt for this or that course." All I have pointed out is that they should, upon joining university, ensure they expose themselves to learning experiences that will develop strong conceptual, analytical, critical and complex reasoning or thinking skills. Employers need this from a prospective employee. They also need men and women with leadership ability and those with strong writing skills. Executives of great corporations in the US, Europe and Asia, assert that strong communication skills—in speech and paper is one the strongest points that underlie productivity of an employee. This is notwithstanding, very few employers in this country acknowledge, nurture and reward this ability. It is important in communicating competencies, decisions, cohesion, desired work culture that the leadership has chosen.

Success in any career means managing organisations, managing people, providing direction and vision to meet the goals for which the organisation or the group exist.

Concerned Kenyan,
Via e-mail.

Kenya headed for fairness but still much to be done

A SOURCE of historical injustices since independence is inequity and its impact. An ugly legacy of colonialism was their zoning of Kenya into productive areas and ploughing more than fair share of the country's resources into such areas at the expense of the rest of Kenya.

Development patterns which then emerged constituted stark contrasts with some pastoralist regions even being declared closed areas. Unfortunately post-independence governments did not discard the same development philosophy to the detriment of fringe areas. This explains why areas like Turkana are overall so pathetically backward.

But Kenyans are turning a new leaf as a new dispensation funds and close the chapter of neglect and marginalization. Two weeks ago, several Bills on devolution were presented to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Local Government Mr. Musalia Mudavadi. The Bills had been drawn by the Task Force on Devolved Government.

Devolution of power and resources to lower levels of governance as opposed to rigid centralisation is at the heart of grumbling over resource distribution. Indeed the rat race for presidency in part springs from the misconception that it guarantees advantage to communities from where the office holder comes. It is because of such reasoning that some politicians stoke herd mentality among their communities and literary preach exclusion.

Fortunately, Kenyans are today unanimous that the old system was skewing growth and dividing citizens and must be changed.

The new Constitution provided the country with a chance for more



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Local Government, Musalia Mudavadi in a past function. Photo/File

than national audit and reform, it is a fresh approach that aims at balance, peace and true harmony.

It does not require a rocket scientist to predict the impact the devolved system will have on development both in the counties and nationally.

The introduction of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in 2003 has shown what big difference participation in development can make. But if CDF was only 2.5 percent of the national budget, what are the possibilities with no less than 15 percent earmarked for counties?

Among the six draft Bills, the Devolved Governments Bill, seeks to create transparent, accountable and efficient county governments.

But even more important is that

the Bill intends to make governance a participatory affair where the people are involved in every step of development.

This will ensure that the self-serving practices and inward looking policies of the past are done away with. But people must stop thinking that counties will in themselves be the magic wand.

There is need for hard thinking and hard work before counties emerge as viable take off areas. The cash from central government could end up being just a drop in the ocean so county governors have a tough task ahead. But all said and done, equity is possible.

Samuel Omondi,
Via e-mail.

Leaders should send correct signals to ordinary Kenyans

PUBLIC pronouncements by some leaders are dismaying. One such salvo was a call to the government to increase the money allocated to Education.

When those in positions of leadership make such pronouncements, the message that comes across to ordinary Kenyans is that responsibility is not shared and two, that for one reason or another, the government has declined to allocate funds to the education sector.

The immediate effect is disdain for government by the people. So what is such a fellow doing in government other than killing it from within? Another leader bemoaned the futility of training young refugees and not providing them with jobs. What this means is that the government does indeed have the jobs but has chosen not to hire refugees or all unemployed Kenyans for that matter. So the responsibility of providing refugees with jobs lies with the government?

Such leaders perhaps without realising it end up tarring the reputation of the government.

But why, pray make such populist statements? The net effect is that they cause distrust towards government. Such leaders confuse Kenyans in word and deed, especially when they turn around and ask wananchi to support the government! Leaders should be able to inspire hope and confidence in Kenyans and should be role models.

Concerned Kenyan,
Via e-mail



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

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Govt urges Kitui community to conserve water

By KAVYU-KURA

THE Government has donated over Kshs800,000 to a Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) in Kitui County to assist the community protect their catchment zone by planting of more trees to curb soil erosion and retain underground water.

Kitimui WRUA in Kauma Location, Matinyani district received a cheque valued at Kshs844, 000 from the Water Services Trust Fund for their exemplary work in protecting the local water resources.

Speaking after presenting the cheque to the group, Water Resource Management Authority (WRMA) chairman Mr Francis Nyenze appealed to the local people to protect Kitimui Water Catchment Zone that serves the two districts of Matinyani

and Kitui West.

Mr Nyenze advised the water users group to manage the donation prudently saying the protection of the environment, and more so water sources was of paramount importance.

He added that the government had allocated huge sums of money towards water provision in arid and semi arid lands through construction of sub service dams, rock catchments, boreholes and shallow wells.

"You should now commit yourselves to the protection of water catchment areas and plant more trees since it is the only way you can take care of the habitat for future generations and alleviate water scarcity," Nyenze said.

He emphasized the need for the

residents of Matinyani and Kitui west districts to form groups saying that the government would only support formal units but not individuals.

"You should become good examples by erecting gabions in your farms in order to prevent soil erosion and allow seepage to the ground of the runway water during rains. That way the local rivers would have water during most of the year," said the WRMA boss.

Nyenze was accompanied by the WRMA Eastern Province regional manager Mr Boniface Mwaniki and the area District Commissioner John Kinjo.

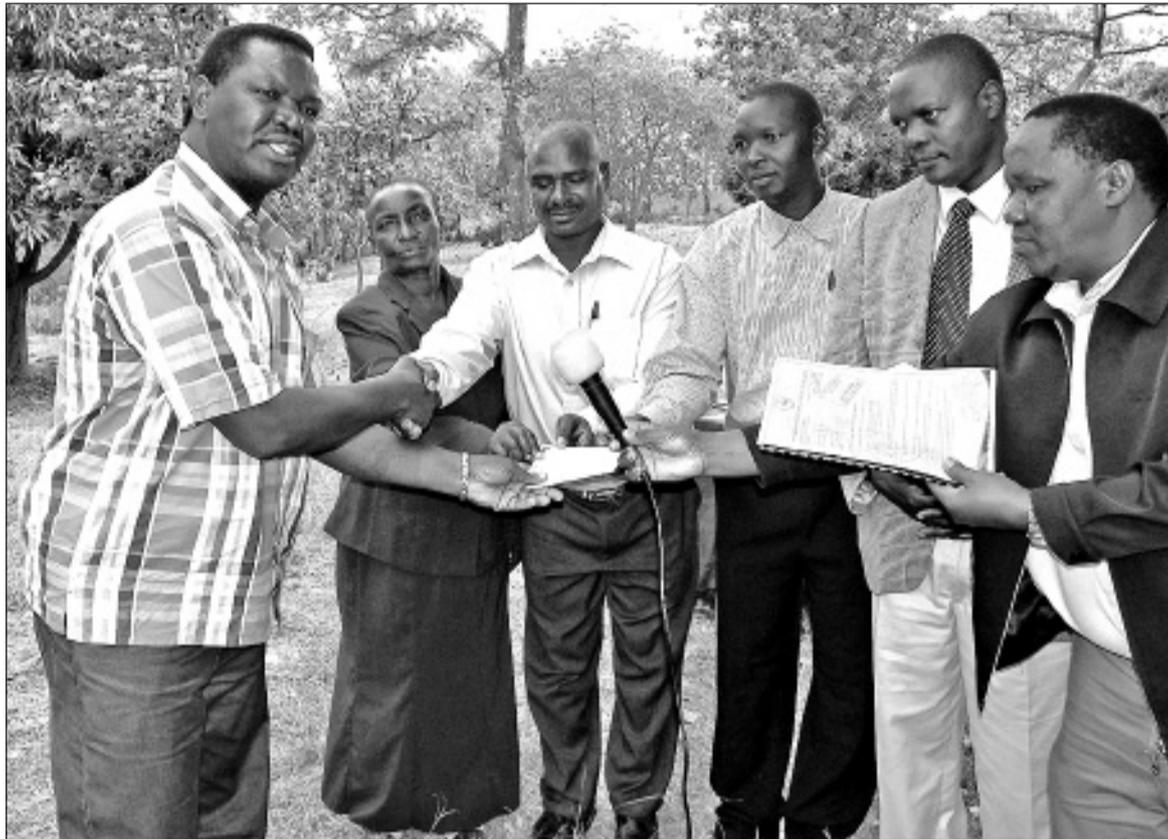
The chairman of the Kitimui WRUA Mr Peter Muniyithya said that the money presented to his group would be used to buy tanks for wa-

ter storage, the establishment of tree nurseries and the planting of trees to protect the water catchment areas.

In 2008, the group received Kshs156, 000 towards the same exercise and at the time Nyenze promised more funding for the group if they utilized the funds well. He made good his promise.

Matinyani DC John Kinjo decried the wanton felling of trees for charcoal burning and uncontrolled sand harvesting. He said the activities had resulted into severe environmental degradation resulting to acute water shortages.

Sand harvesting for commercial purposes and charcoal burning have never benefited the local community thus they should be stopped, said DC Kinjo.



Mr. Nyenze hands over the cheque to Kitimui WRUA Chairman Peter Muniyithya and Treasurer Jedidah Mitau as Boniface Mwaniki (right), DC Kinjo (second right) and Robert Syengo look on.
Photo/Kavyu Kura

Coast hit hard by shortage of nurses

By BEKADZO TONDO

Public health facilities in Coast Province are faced with a shortage of about 260 nurses, the Regional Director of Public Health and Sanitation Dr Anisa Omar has said.

According to Dr Omar, the shortage has been aggravated by the recent upgrading of health facilities in the nine newly created districts in the region bringing the total number to 22 up from 13.

Dr. Omar said the newly upgraded health facilities are however being managed by medical personnel from the old district hospitals.

She said that the shortage which previously stood at about 440 was slightly brought down after the government employed 180 nurses through the Economic Stimulus Program (ESP).

"However with the increased health facilities, more nurses are needed to cope with the high number of people flocking to the facilities seeking quality medication," said Dr Omar.

The director said the acute shortage of nurses has overstretched existing personnel as they struggle to provide medical care.

Speaking at Karisa Maitha play grounds, Dr Omar further noted that lack of basic infrastructural facilities such as maternity wings, vehicles and ICT equipments for data management in the health facilities had complicated the situation.

Dr Omar said there was need to bring health facilities closer to the people to enable them get quality medication services. The director announced that the government had put up 20 model health centers in the region which will enhance the delivery of quality services to the residents.

She said most of the projects are nearing completion and that Kshs 5 million has been released to oversee the remaining work. Dr Omar also urged legislators to introduce a law that abolishes fee charged on maternity and post natal care.

Bungoma releases its annual budget

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

BUNGOMA Municipal Council has publicized its budget the 2011/2012 fiscal year.

Finance, staff and general purposes committee chair Cllr. Joseph Magudah announced to the town residents that the council's total estimated expenditure will be Kshs.157,972,533.

Cllr. Magudah added that the expenditure is 20 per cent higher compared to the 2010/2011 financial year's budget. "This is mainly due to the annual salary increment awarded to all staff as per the terms and conditions of services of local authorities," he explained. The council, Cllr. Magudah said hopes to collect a total of Kshs.159,597,183 in revenue, thus giving an estimated surplus of Kshs.1, 624,650.

In his budget speech, the finance chair revealed that the council has projected to collect a total of Kshs.15.7 million revenue from property rates, Kshs.13.0 million from Single business permits, Kshs.2.0million from Agriculture cess, Kshs.9,240,980 from the market and slaughter house fee, Kshs.24,688,685 from bus park and parking fees and Kshs.1,500,400 from House/office/canteen/hotel rent.

Additional revenue will be generated from conservancy fee which is projected to raise Kshs.1.5 million, GoK contribution in lieu of rates (CILOR) which is expected to generate Kshs.2,035,261, while the council expects to receive Kshs.7,483,955 from RMLF Disbursement and Kshs.76,103,652 as LATF allocation in the current financial year.

The finance chair said the council will spend Kshs.99,904,016 on recurrent expenditure while an additional Kshs.28,635,894 will be spent on capital projects. Cllr. Magudah claimed that most of capital projects/ service delivery projects were identified by the residents in a participatory process held in November 2010.

The town clerk Mr. Sam Owande assured town residents that the budget will be implemented to the letter and urged them to report any misuse of funds during the implementation process to his office for appropriate action.

Survey returns no confidence verdict on leaders

By KAVYU-KURA

KENYA'S leadership has been rated as poor and wanting since it has failed to effectively address unchecked corruption, tribalism, poverty, insecurity and unemployment in the country.

In a score card report on a survey carried recently by the Strategic Public Relations and Research Limited on the performance of the government on good governance, the citizens returned a verdict of dismal by the government.

During the survey undertaken in 15 districts in the country, the researchers established that majority of Kenyans felt that issues of corruption, poverty, tribalism and unemployment had not been sufficiently addressed.

The report that was generated under the aegis of the Jadili coalition that brings together a number of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) further indicated that the respondents during the research rated the government performance approval rating at 6.1 index.

The Jadili coalition is led by the Community AID International (CIA) while other members are Abantu for Development, African Woman and Child Features (AWCFS), Bridge Af-

rica and Uzima Foundation.

"The low rating (of the governments' performance) has been attributed to lack of commitment by the government to address the challenges confronting majority of Kenyans," said the report that was unveiled at a leaders meeting organized by the Bridge Africa NGO at a Matuu hotel in Yatta district recently.

The ceremony to launch the survey report dubbed "Survey report on People verdict on the performance of the government, views on the constitution and the issue of leadership," was presided over by the Yatta DO 1 Geoffrey Tanui.

However, the report says majority respondents from the sampled counties that included Mombasa, Kisumu, Siaya, Machakos, and Kilifi held the view that the newly promulgated constitution provided a window of optimism in addressing the identified problems if implemented to the latter.

Majority of the respondents at 17.3 percent cited unemployment as a major economic issue that required attention, while the most itchy social issues were tribalism and insecurity as pointed out by 22.8 percent and 12.2 percent of the respondents respectively.

At 49.3 percent the respondents were concerned about poor governance while 19.8 percent rued at corruption as the major political issues.

"This survey has found leadership to be the top priority factor in the view of most respondents in the quest for realization of good governance and societal prosperity in Kenya in general and in counties in particular. All the problems mentioned by the respondents as facing majority of Kenyans today, such as corruption, poverty, unemployment, tribalism, etc are all attributed to poor leadership," said the report.

The report added that in order to tackle the leadership crisis, majority of citizens called for the empowerment of citizens to reject poor leadership. Some of the steps they recommend are periodic residents forums and vetting of aspiring candidates to ensure only leaders who have integrity get to public offices at both national and county levels.

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While presiding over the launch of the report, Tanui described it as a true reflection of the feeling of the Kenyan people adding that given the opportunity he could not have come with a better verdict. He said the problems emanated from the election of leaders who do not deliver to the expectations of the voters.

"Even as Kenyans point to poor leadership as the cause of socio-economic and political problems, they are largely to blame for choosing wrong leaders who engage themselves with personal selfish interests and businesses once elected to positions of leadership," noted DO Tanui.

DC blames hunger on sugar farming

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

KAKAMEGA Central acting District Commissioner (DC) Mr. Hillary Mibei has blamed the prevailing starvation in the region on over reliance on sugar cane industry.

The DC says that the over dependence on sugar cane farming in the region has adversely affected maize and other food crops production.

He notes with regrets that western province, a region that is endowed with sufficient rain and arable land is perennially affected by famine due to over dependency on sugar one.

Mr. Mibei challenges the region's residents to diversify into several food crops such as maize, cassava, millet and sorghum so as to put hunger at bay.

"If people can set a side enough land for food crops instead of occupying almost the whole land with sugar cane, I am sure there can be no hunger in this region," he says.

The provincial administrator urges families in the region to always give top priority to food crops during seasons for tilling their farms.

Mr. Mibei's remarks came as most families in the region faced starvation due to acute shortage of food in the area which has led to a sharp increase in prices to a level beyond reach by most families.

By the time of going to press a two kilogram tin of maize locally known as korokoro was retailing at Kshs 150, up from Kshs. 40 last year and early this year.

Western province is the home of four (4) sugar factories namely, Mumias, Nzoia, West Kenya and Butali.

Prior to the establishment of the sugar factories in early 1970's, western province was the second largest maize producer in the county.

North rift was and still is the largest maize producer in the country.

Maize acreage has reduced drastically in western province because most families prefer growing sugar cane to maize and other food crops.

This scenario is impacting negatively on food security in the area, hence needs to be reversed in order to save area residents from perennial famine.

Otuoma dismisses NTA audit report

By JOEL JUMA and NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE National Tax-payers Association (NTA) has released an audited report with details of how Kshs.7.2 million allocated to Funyula Constituency Development Fund (CDF) during the 2006/2007 financial year was mismanaged.

The report was released as the area MP, who is the Minister for Youths Affairs and Sports Dr. Paul Otuoma, demanded that the report be reviewed to reflect the true picture on the ground before being released to the public.

The association officials clashed with Funyula CDF officials during a meeting held at Funyula market after residents demanded that auditing be extended to local authority funds.

The residents said construction of Funyula market has stalled despite being funded to the tune of Kshs40 million by the Government.

The residents led by Fred Mukoya, Vincent Awori accused CDF officials of failing to consult them while financing projects in the area.

They told Funyula District Officer Bertha Onyango who was the guest that CDF officials were imposing projects on them.

The report indicates that many projects were badly done while others were funded and yet they do not exist on the ground.

Several projects reported by NTA as non-existent in the constituency are at the center of the row.

NTA alleged in its report said the Funyula Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee funded ghost projects.

NTA Western Regional Coordinator Everlyne Khamala cited a primary school that is claimed to have been funded to the tune of Kshs200, 000 and yet it is not on the ground.

Hillary Pondo who is the CDF Project Coordinator 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 Opondo.

Opondo wondered why the association was quoting projects not found in his constituency. "There is no such school in Funyula constituency," said Opondo.

The report by the board said the school does not even appear in the list of projects to be implemented. Records from the education office indicate that Bururu Primary School does not exist.

NTA National Coordinator in Charge of Regions Martin Nabisa however said the school was funded to the tune of Kshs200, 000.

The said the school was identified on project code as 4-90-177-3110202-104-045-009 during the allocation of the funds 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, the rehabilitation of Sigalame water tank, Sio Port water supply and Murondo water spring projects of the year 2006/2007 were financed by the Government.

Former Vice President Moody Awori was the MP then. Opondo said the Ministry of Public Works is exaggerating projects estimates. "Contractors are subjected to hard conditions before they are paid," added Opondo.

He explained that a classroom that was constructed at cost of Kshs1.2 million before he was elected can now be put up at a cost of Kshs600, 000.

Nabisa however said the health centre was not on the ground when they were auditing projects in the constituency.

NTA recommended that the Constituency Development Fund Committee should complete all stalled projects and fully account for the missing funds, rebuild badly implemented projects and also make available all records of projects done by CDF funds plus the Bills of Quantities[BQs] for scrutiny.

All 47 Counties to have airstrips —PS

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government has formulated a policy aimed at connecting all the 47 Counties with air transport services.

The policy will also ensure that each County establishes an airstrip while others will be upgraded to the required national and international standards.

Permanent Secretary in the ministry of Transport Cyrus Njiru says the move aims at improving air connectivity between the counties as part of promoting national cohesion and economic growth.

"We are up grading some of the existing airstrips inline with vision 2030," adds Dr Njiru.

The PS spoke as he inspected Kakamega airstrip, which is undergoing an expansion programme at a cost of Kshs90 million.

The Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) Managing Director Steven Gichuki, regional manager Peter Wafula and the Western Regional Commissioner Peter Okwanyo were present.

Njiru says tourism services are set to improve in Western Kenya following the completion of the Kisumu International Airport.

He announced the airport will be commissioned next month as 95 percent of the expansion works has been done. The PS says the project worth Kshs.3 billion is set to see farmers in the region export their goods to foreign countries with ease.

"We have inspected the work and all is well. We can commission the project any time as the run away is complete," said Njiru.

Eng. Gichuki said it was regrettable that the expansion of the Busia airstrip has hit a snag due to lack of land.

He appealed to the Busia Municipal Council to avail land for the expansion. Gichuki's remarks comes barely a month after the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Transport David Were said there was need for the Government to allocate adequate funds to expand the airstrips.

Were said the rate at which flights were experiencing mechanical problems was high.

He claimed that the runaways were not smooth for movement of the aeroplanes. Were also demanded that the District Security Committees be responsible for the management of airstrips.

He said it was sad that animals were being grazed in some airstrips.

Njiru and Gichuki said the number of flights in various airstrips will increase after the expansion programme is finalized.



Regional Co-ordinator (Western Province) Evelyn Khamala presenting the report on the project status at Funyula's Sirindiro Gardens recently. Photo/Nyakwar Odawo.

Council calls for road safety measures to protect pedestrians

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE National Road Safety Council wants road planners to earmark a lane for pedestrians to curb road carnage.

David Njoroge, who is a member of the council, says that a significant number of accidents is caused by poor road designs which must be redesigned to address the plight of other road users.

Speaking in Murang'a town during a function to train motor cyclists, he cited Thika Road currently under construction as a waiting disaster if certain measures are not put in place to protect pedestrians.

"Thika road which is under construction must ensure that pedestrians among them school going children are protected to avert the scenario currently being wit-

nessed along Mombasa road where pedestrians are knocked almost on a daily basis by speeding motorists," said Njoroge.

He at the same time pointed out that boda boda operators required training to stop exposing themselves and their passengers to risk of accidents.

Njoroge revealed that the council, in conjunction with Auto

Mobile Association of Kenya has come up with subsidized training programmes that will enable the operators comply with highway codes.

"There are more than 400,000 motor cycles operating on Kenyan roads and the number is expected to rise to over a million owing to the potential in the sector," said Njoroge.

The council, he said, will use all forums to educate Kenyans on their roles in curbing road accidents by always observing highway codes.

Boda boda operators on their part claimed that substandard helmets had infiltrated the local market and therefore exposed the riders and their passengers to great risks.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

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Significant reforms should come from within

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**JANE
MURUTU**

AS we approach the last quarter of this year, we are happy that our peace networks in Rift Valley namely BAKENA, an acronym for Baringo, Kericho and Nakuru, COPEN; coalition of peace in North Rift and NABOK, meaning Narok, Bomet and Kajiado, have in the last month been trained on how to act in the event of imminent tension. Similar networks have also been formed in Western and Nyanza provinces.

Just like the authors of the book titled "The Invisible Violence- A case study of Rift Valley and Western regions recommended, we are trying to build formidable grassroots structures that will work with communities to articulate issues together. In this regard, we have built the capacities of about 140 civil society organizations through simulation in the past one month. Participants in this second simulation

were given the time to plot conflict trends on a timeline matrix stemming from 1963 to date. This is important because the trends help inform the communities, of the span in which conflicts were at their peak in order to chart out a local mechanism to mitigate the conflict. It was apparent that around the general election years, conflicts usually were on the rise and they would remarkably subside a few months after the exercise.

Then in groups participants were introduced to conflict characterization and severity grading. As epitomized in an exercise called the "secret box", the solution to conflict lies within the person who lives and interacts with the community on daily basis since the person

has full information on the resources that every intervention requires quick, midterm or long term planning. Before the training ended, the networks were introduced to the command structure, on how they would work out coordination modalities in case of an impending conflict.

Besides the simulation training, we had tailor-made sessions on resource mobilization and proposal writing to help the networks to sustain themselves even after the end of the project.

We have printed 400 books of the Invisible Violence and 12, 000 copies of the easy read versions. We are optimistic that soon we will be able to print the revised curriculum.

On the ongoing reform process, the former Liberian President Amos Sawyer, who is the current African Peer Review Mechanism chairman, said recently that "Kenya is leading the way in the reform sector with the most progressive Constitu-

tion in Africa." I went ahead to check the meaning of reforms in Wikipedia and I found out that it means "to put or change into an improved form or condition; to amend or improve by change of color or removal of faults or abuses, beneficial change, more specifically, reversion to a pure original state, to repair, restore or to correct."

The grim reality we have to grapple with is whether it's the police, electoral, Land or whatever form of reforms, they are spearheaded by people who have been socialized differently. What is needful is to perform individual reforms first of our attitudes, respect for the rule of law and each other before other government reforms follow suit. Each one of us has a responsibility to repair ourselves before we sing the "reform" song.

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

Media and peacebuilding in Kenya

BY PETER MBEKE

FOLLOWING the initial shock of the eruption of post-election violence in Kenya, the mainstream media fraternity under the leadership of Media Owners Association (MOA) came together to support peace-building initiatives in the country.

All media houses dedicated airtime and space to carry messages of peace and healing. They aired special messages from Partners for Peace, a civil society peacebuilding forum, asking Orange Democratic Movement and Party of National

Unity leaders to call upon their supporters to stop the violence; and calling upon Odinga and Kibaki to negotiate a settlement. The media mobilized Kenyans to attend the special prayers for peace for the country on Sunday, 6th January, 2008 and dedicated a special day for peace programming.

Saficom and Celtel (now Airtel), the only two mobile phone companies in Kenya by then, promoted peace through the SMS. For example, Safaricom, which had over 7.4 million subscribers, disseminated SMS messages such as: "In the interest of peace, we appeal to Kenyans to embrace each other in the

spirit of patriotism, and exercise restraint to restore calm to our nation." Celtel, which had over 3.2 million subscribers, on the other hand, sent peace messages through SMS saying "One people one nation, choose peace".

Pamoja FM, located and broadcasting with a radius of 5Km to the 14 villages in Kibera slums which was the epicenter of post-election violence in Nairobi, organized peace events for youths and aired peace messages urging peaceful co-existence in the area. Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) has been

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Understanding the roots of African conflicts

BY **ABIODUN ONADIPE** and
DAVID LORD

NO corner of the globe and no society is without conflict. Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa have all been the scene of tremendous human carnage and material destruction in this century. But while many parts of the world have moved towards greater stability and political and economic co-operation, Africa and the territory of the former Soviet Union remain cauldrons of instability. The variety of possible conflicts in any society allows different perspectives and frameworks -- political, economic, historical, social, cultural, psychological -- for defining and describing them. The fullest explanations also take into account the internal and external dynamics of conflict. In recent years, those studying conflicts have paid increasing attention to multidisciplinary approaches to understanding and responding to a wide range of conflicts.

One way of looking at Africa's violent present and recent past is through the frameworks of identity, participation, distribution and legitimacy. According to political scientist Stephen Stedman, these causes of conflict can be subdivided further into struggles for power, ethnicity, militarism, alienation of people, and deep-rooted historical, socio-economic and cultural elements.

Identity relates to how the individual sees himself in relation to socially, politically and territorially delineated groups. Participation denotes how well an individual considers his access to political and economic decision-making will result in beneficial policy changes. Distribution refers to the level of perceived fairness and



People studying conflicts have paid increasing attention to multidisciplinary approaches to understanding and responding to a wide range of conflicts.

justice in the sharing of resources, such as land, financial and educational opportunities. Legitimacy refers to perceptions of the rightness of the rules governing political competition. These areas of conflict overlap and can often reinforce each other. For instance, identity conflicts can coincide with limits on political participation and uneven distribution of scarce resources, as can be observed in many conflicts in Africa.

Among the economic causes of African conflict that have been noted by the United Nations are: "A hostile international economic environment and African vulnerability to the changes in external conditions (e.g. terms of trade), external debt

burden, shift from a global economy based on the exploitation of natural resources (the base for most African economies) to one based on the exploitation of knowledge and information, declining national incomes accompanied by reduction in social spending, food insecurity, and increasing poverty and economic inequities, as well as poor economic performance."

Africa's colonial legacy is also often cited as a continuing source of conflict. With hundreds of ethnic and linguistic groups lumped together in 53 countries, the majority of their borders arbitrarily determined by colonial powers with little

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Busia elders urged to safeguard peace

BY **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

KAKAPEL cultural centre in Teso North District in Busia County has been cited as one of the ideal avenues of uniting communities in the region.

This observation was made recently by the Partnership for Peace Project co-manager Jane Murutu at the centre during the stakeholders' conference.

Murutu, who was the chief guest during the conference, told participants that the cultural centre has potential to integrate communities' in the area.

The participants at the one-day conference facilitated by Teso Peace and Human Rights Development Initiative (TEPEHURDI) were drawn from the Iteso, Sabaot and Bukusu communities.

Murutu called on elders from the three communities to use the cultural centre to nurture a peaceful co-existence.

She said the cultural centre provided an arena for elders to advise the youth on the importance of peaceful co-existence through songs, traditional dances, sports and drama. The peace project co-manager reminded the elders that they have a moral responsibility to ensure that youths are not used by politicians to disturb peace in the area.

Murutu cautioned the elders against abdicating their responsibility saying history will judge them harshly if they allow the area to degenerate into violence during the next general elections.

She urged the elders to encourage inter-marriages among the three communities so that no community can turn against another community because of blood relationship.

Speaking at the same conference, Cheptais District Peace Committee chair Mr. Richard Naibei Lalampaa said that the present Kenya needs people with brains and who are peaceful but not war-lords.

Mr. Lalampaa attributed the prevailing peace in Mt. Elgon region to efforts by TEPEHURDI and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The executive director of TEPEHURDI Mr. Cleophas Okisai disclosed that his organization has managed to take 60 people to foreign countries to learn the importance of peace.

Mr. Okisai added that his organization in conjunction with Kakapel cultural Centre use theatre to provoke positive ethnicity as one of the mechanisms of promoting peace in the area.

Preach peace: Catholic clerics tell leaders

BY **JOEL JUMA**

CATHOLIC clerics have appealed to politicians and leaders to reconcile Kenyans as the country gears up for elections next year.

Cardinal John Njue and Bishop Philip Sulumeti of the Kakamega Catholic Diocese said politicians should preach forgiveness as they launch their campaigns for various seats.

The two said Kenyans should boycott elections if communities that differed after the 2007 elections are not reconciled. "As politicians love one another, they should tell Kenyans to emulate them," said Njue.

Njue and Sulumeti made the remarks in Lugari during the consecration and dedication of St John The Baptist

Catholic Church Likuyani.

Present were area MP Cyrus Jirongo, Saboti legislator Eugene Wamalwa and former assistant minister Raphael Wanjala.

Jirongo regretted that there are politicians who are campaigning for various seats without emphasizing on peace and reconciliation in their messages.

"This country is still healing. Politicians should keep reminding Kenyans to forgive one another after what happened in 2008," he added.

Jirongo said peace and unity should be in every politician's message.

Wamalwa said Kenyans turned against one another in 2008 because politicians incited them against each other.

"If we had preached peace in 2007,

our country would have been very different now," he added.

He said Kenyans should never allow what happened in 2008 to recur.

"This can be made possible if you ignore inciting statements and elect upright people. Elect those who do not discriminate," he reiterated.

He said the country needs leadership that will enhance unity in its diversity.

Archbishop Njue said youths should keep in mind that no community can survive on its own.

"We all need each other. You may have what you have but you need something else from other people," he stated.

He reiterated that every community has got its strength and weaknesses.



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Uhuru urged to speed up release of cash for IDPs

By **JOEL JUMA**

THE National Humanitarian Advisory Board has urged parliament and Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta to speed up the release of funds for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In the just presented national budget, Kshs 4.5 billion was allocated for the resettlement and compensation of IDPs and the families displaced in Mau forest released.

"We need to go to the next General Elections when the camps are empty and the families displaced in Mau settled to avoid more problems," said the Board Chairman Moses Akaranga.

Akaranga said the resettlement process can only be hastened if Parliament approves the money for the purchase of land for the over 3,500 household currently staying in camps without delay.

He explained that the families displaced from Mau Forest need to have their land acquired to curb their suffering.

Akaranga also told MPs from Mau Forest region not to politicise the resettlement process, saying that the board was determined to provide a solution to the families before the next elections.

The former Public Service Minister was speaking in Sabatia constituency where he addressed youths and women groups.

Akaranga has declared to run for the post of Governor in Vihiga County during the next General Elections. He is set to face other candidates who include former Educationist Gaylod Avedi among others.

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

The Government deployed over 190 forest rangers to get the families out of the land.

Hassan was reported to have said that money was required to facilitate compensation for the 7,500 fami-



IDP Camp in Eldoret showgrounds. Inset: Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, Finance Minister.

Photo/File

lies displaced from Mau Forest during their eviction.

Hassan said that some of the problems facing the resettlement process were political.

He said the secretariat had performed despite lacking adequate money.

Akaranga explained that the board was concerned that the Kshs1.9 billion allocated to the ministry of Lands to facilitate the purchase of land to settle the IDPs in the last financial year was not fully utilised.

"I do not think the money was exhausted as there is no land bought worth the amount released by the Treasury last year," said Akaranga.

He said the minister for Lands James Orengo need to take up the matter with his officers to have the money accounted for.

He explained that the families settled were still few compared to the amount of money released by the Treasury for the exercise.

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supporting the Tumaini na Undugu (Hope and Brotherhood) campaign, a charity supported by KBC, church organizations and private sector, that assists displaced people within the IDP camps.

Radio Umoja in partnership with the Regional Centre for Stability and Peace in Africa conducted live debates to promote peace between January and February. Radio Ramogi called for peaceful co-existence between Luos and Kikuyus in Nyanza and mobilized individuals, churches and private sector to provide relief assistance to displaced people in Nairobi, Central, Rift Valley and Nyanza.

The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) put out an advert calling on Kenyans to shun violence and keep peace. They also called on the journalists to adhere to ethical standards. The National Media Group's (NMG) Easy FM supported a campaign started by Kenyans in the United States that collated and aired messages of peace and healing

Media and peacebuilding in Kenya

to Kenyans in the Diaspora under the banner of Uungana Pamoja (come together) and Harambee (pulling together).

Martin Luther King Africa Foundation awarded in the Active Non-Violence Award to Nation TV as the most consistent channel that devoted most airtime to promote non-violence during the conflict. The then NTV's Current Affairs Editor Julie Gichuru, who is now with CitiZen TV, got special recognition for promoting peace during and after the post-election violence.

Kenya Television Network (KTN) also vigorously promoted peace building.

InterNews Network organized a series of workshops to build capacity of journalists and editors to respond to the unfolding conflict. InterNews Network, the International Media Support, Kenya Editors' Guild, the Kenya Union of Journalists, Media Council of Kenya and The Kenya Association

of Photographers, Illustrators and Designers and the Kenya Correspondents Association, all held workshops to build the capacity of journalists to responsibly address peace-building concerns.

The media also supported the process of initiating mediation efforts between ODM and PNU by calling for urgent settlement of the crisis in their editorials and commentaries. Kofi Annan, the Chief Mediator for the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Team, for accurately and fairly reporting on the negotiations.

It will be remembered that the mainstream media provided live coverage of the signing of the power sharing pact by President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga.

As Kenya approaches the next general elections, it is hoped that the media will play a more positive role in securing and maintaining peace in the country.



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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

TJRC promises justice to victims of injustices

BY NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) has assured all victims of historical injustices in Western province of swift justice.

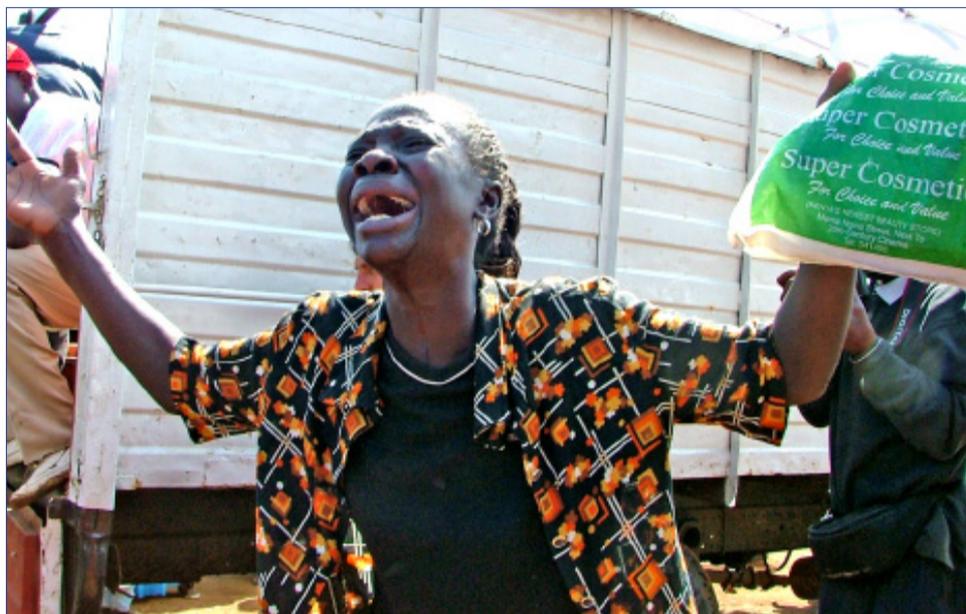
Speaking during a public hearing session at the Busia County hall recently, the commissioners, led by Prof. Tom Ojienda, said TJRC will push for the compensation of the victims and also ensure that appropriate legal action is taken against the perpetrators.

He appealed to victims of past injustices to come out and present their cases to the commission for documentation to pave way for restitution.

During the hearings civil society organizations representing Teso community accused successive governments of sidelining the area and denying residents political positions, development and education.

Mary Emadau, a teacher at Malaba Primary School who is also the Chairperson of Gender Based Taskforce in Teso said that the Teso community has been marginalized and none of them has ever been appointed to the cabinet since independence.

The task force chair at the same time pointed out that Teso boundaries are yet



A woman wails after all her properties got burnt in 2007/2008 post-election violence. Photo/File

to be defined, a situation she noted had caused a lot of rifts between the community and their neighbours.

She pointed out that there were practi-

cally no tarmac roads in the whole of Teso district.

She said that women in Teso are the hardest hit with the area lacking basic ne-

cessities such as maternities, gynecologists, pediatrics and mortuaries.

She also cited outdated cultural practices and lack of enforcement of law as some of the great impediments in the fight against rape, gender based violence and marginalization.

On post election violence, the civil society organization chair faulted the provincial administration in the district saying they had declined to protect the Teso community members who had returned to the district after being displaced from other towns during the post election violence.

"Although members of the Teso community suffered from the post election violence, they were never compensated as was the cases in other parts of the country," she said, adding that only the church community, the Red Cross and World Vision came to their rescue.

She called upon TJRC to move with speed and ensure that the community is compensated for past injustices including having their rights as Kenyans safeguarded.

The TJRC commissioners included Major general (RTD) Ahmed Farah, Ambassador Berhanu Dinka, Professor Tom Ojienda and Margaret Shava.

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consideration for ethnic boundaries, state-building and the implantation of ideals of nationalism have proved difficult. African politicians and military leaders have too often chosen to consolidate their own positions and those of their immediate supporters by manipulating communal and internal competition over the allocation of resources, religion, identity, territorial claims and political participation. The result has often been communal warfare. In many cases, colonial borders also cause tension by dividing ethnic groups, cutting through shared resources and hindering economic and social mobility.

Conflict in Africa has also been portrayed as resulting from a clash between modernisation and democratisation and other entrenched forces in society. For example, leadership in Africa is largely authoritarian and based on systems of economic and social patronage. Pluralism, transparency and participative decision-making are rare commodities within African nation-states. Without open and responsive policies that are seen to be fair by the majority within a state, those in power are the sole winners and the governed the losers. Irresponsible leaders cling to power or the trappings and benefits of their limited power and refuse to accept political defeat and peaceable competition.

Last but not least is the psychological and biological perspective on conflict, aggression and violence. One example of this comes from Francis Fukuyama, an American academic, who writes: "The basic social

problem that any society faces is to control the aggressive tendencies of its young men. In hunter-gatherer societies, the vast preponderance of violence is over sex, a situation that continues to characterise domestic violent crime in contemporary post-industrial societies. Older men in the community have generally been responsible for socialising younger ones by ritualising their aggression, often by directing it toward en-

emies outside the community. Channelling aggression outside the community may not lower society's overall rate of violence, but it at least offers them the possibility of domestic peace between wars."

Widespread societal conflict in Africa is often played out against the backdrop of deep poverty, illiteracy and weak systems of governance. Undermined by unfavourable terms of trade and indebtedness, ad-

ministrative failures to respond to social needs, underdeveloped infrastructure, low levels of education and widespread corruption, governments are hard pressed to also cope with ethnic, communal, religious and regional rivalries. Somalia represents examples of "failed", "collapsed" or "fragmented" states where conflicts were and are being prosecuted by sub-state actors acting in a virtual power vacuum.

Understanding the roots of African conflicts

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MWA pleads with state to spare their matatus

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MATATU Welfare Association has said that the Government's proposal to phase out the 14-seater vehicles to higher capacity vehicles might just be a dream as the programme has so many disadvantages.

The national Chairman Mr Dickson Mbugua who was speaking to Nyeri PSV matatu operators in the town recently said that the programme cannot be possible and urged the Government to rescind the move.

Many youths will be rendered jobless if the programme is implemented and lead to increased cases of insecurity in the country.

"Many youths will be rendered jobless after this move and this will cause insecurity in the country since those affected must feed their families," he added.

He added that the programme will not ease traffic congestion as many may think.

"There will still be many vehicles on the road and the roads remain the same. What is the logic of canceling the licenses of matatus and then license motorbikes? Let us streamline the PSV operations on the right way," said the chairman.

Mbugua who was accompanied by Nyeri Sacco Chairman Mr Peter Theuri added that many operators may be pushed out of business since majority may not be in a position to transform to the higher capacity bus. He said they will lobby to the highest offices to ensure that the move is reversed.

On corruption on the roads, Mbugua disclosed that they are signing a memorandum of understanding in the name of 'Kitu Kidogo Out Operation' with the various organizations including Transparency International, KACC, CIC and Kenya Police in order to help wipe out corruption on the roads.

The Matatu industry loses over Kshs 1.8 billion per year in form of corruption on the roads to corrupt traffic officers and illegal curtails which continue to wreck havoc in the sector. Nyena Sacco called upon the Government to ensure that all the stakeholders are involved during the crackdown of the PSV vehicles to avoid transport crisis.

Senior State Counsel charged with corruption

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

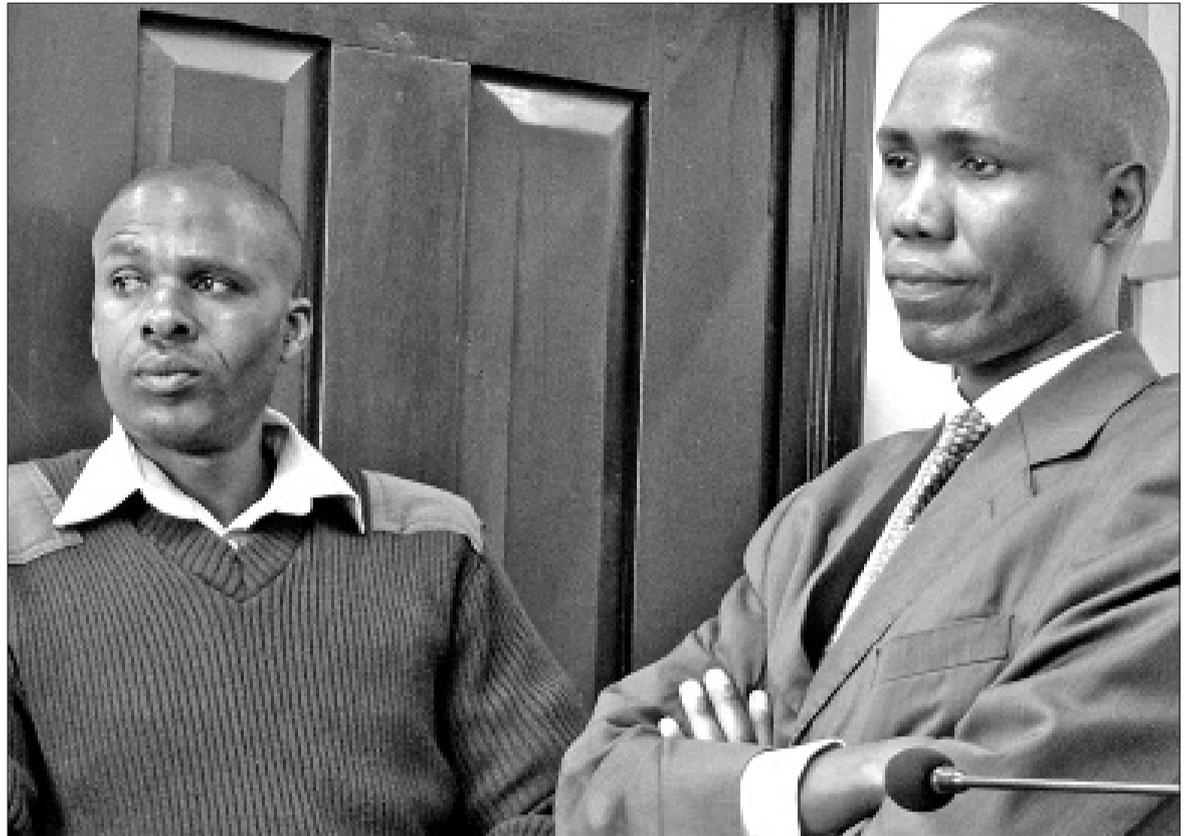
A SENIOR State Counsel Mr James Makura was recently charged in a Nyeri court over corruption allegations.

Makura who is based in Nyeri was charged with three counts of corruption which included soliciting for a benefit and receiving of a benefit.

The first count indicated that on 17th June this year at Hill Rock Inn in Nyeri town being a person employed by State Law Office as a Senior State Counsel corruptly solicited for a benefit of Kshs 50,000 from Mr Peter Chaina Magere as an inducement to recommend prosecution in a case referred to him for perusal and advice by the Criminal Investigations Department being CID file no.6/ 2010, a matter in which the said public body was concerned.

Count two stated that on 22nd June this year at State Law Office, he corruptly solicited for a benefit of Sh 25,000 from Mr Peter Chaina Magere as an inducement so as to recommend prosecution in a case referred to him for perusal and advice by the Criminal Investigations Department being CID file no.6/ 2010, a matter in which the said public body was concerned.

The court further charged him for receiving of a benefit where he was charged that on 22nd June



Central Provincial Deputy State Counsel Mr James Makura (right) in a Nyeri court recently where he was charged with corruption. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

this year at Provincial Commissioner's office in Nyeri town being a person employed by State Law Office as a Senior State Counsel corruptly received a benefit of Sh 25,000 from Mr Peter Chaina Magere as an inducement so as to

recommend prosecution in a case referred to him for perusal and advice by the Criminal Investigations Department being CID file no.6/ 2010, a matter in which the said public body was concerned.

Makura who appeared be-

fore Nyeri Chief Magistrate Mrs Stella Muketi however denied all the charges and was released on a cash bail of Sh 50,000.

The hearing starts this month.

He is being presented in court lawyer Mr Koin Lompo.

Busia council receives millions for projects

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUSIA County Council is set to receive Kshs107 million as Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) allocation in the new financial year to enable the local authority undertake its projects.

According to the Council's Finance, Staff and General Purposes Committee chairman, councillor Sikoyo, the LATF allocation will help boost council revenue and expenditure slated at Kshs 130.2 million against a projected income of Kshs130.4 million.

The finance chairman further points out that the Council plans to generate more revenue by enhancing the collection of taxes to surpass the target of Kshs23.3 million during the financial year.

He says the council will spend Kshs 46.6 million on Capital projects which include roads and water while Kshs 83.4 million will go towards the recurrent expenditure.

Other projects to be undertaken by the local authority during the next financial year include the construction of modern toilets at Bumala market at an estimated cost of Kshs 2.5 million, the ongoing construction of rental office building at the council headquarters at a cost of Kshs3 million and maintenance of drainages in various civic wards at an estimated cost of Kshs2 million.

In addition the council plans to rehabilitate various markets and feeder roads at an estimated cost of Kshs2million and Kshs 4 mil-

lion respectively.

The county clerk George Maruti who also present during the budget reading appealed to the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) to work closely with the monitoring and evaluation team to ensure that all the projects within their respective areas are properly done before any payment to contractors.

He at the same time appealed to local traders to pay revenue to the local authority so that the council can be able to provide services effectively, adding that the civic leaders should team up with the residents from their respective areas to ensure that transparency and accountability is upheld during the implementation process.

Tsavo human trafficking syndicate smashed

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) have smashed a human trafficking syndicate through the Tsavo National Park.

KWS officials say unscrupulous agents have been ferrying aliens disguised as tourists who are later dropped in the park before they are sneaked out of the country through the Kenya-Tanzania border. This emerged after 23 aliens were recently arrested without valid travel papers. Seventeen of the suspects were found in a cave while the rest were arrested along the Taveta-Mwatate road.

The warden in charge of Tsavo West National Park Southern sector, Mr. Samuel Rukaria, said the suspects were arrested by KWS rangers on routine patrol.

Speaking from Taveta, the warden said the suspects included 10 Ethiopia and seven Somalia nationals, all aged below 20 years of age. Mr. Rukaria says the KWS officials, who were tipped off by members of the public, raided the den where they found the aliens in a cave near Kedong area, Taveta district.

The official says footprints led the rangers to a cave where the suspects were hiding. Mr. Rukaria claimed the foreigners had been 'imported' by an agent who hid them in the cave as they awaited a Tanzanian agent to move them out of the country. "From the look of things, the cave has been used as a hideout for quite sometime to shelter illegal aliens and the arrest is a major breakthrough in the fight against rampant human trafficking in the county," said Mr. Rukaria.

Ndikwe primary school head saved by parents

By MORRIS GITHENYA

A SWIFT move by parents in Murang'a thwarted plans by the Ministry of Education to transfer a primary school head teacher until he completes projects initiated in the school.

The parents of Ndikwe primary school paralysed learning at the

school and barred the incoming head teacher from assuming office, claiming that the outgoing Ms Margaret Kigotho had helped initiate projects in the school which were still incomplete.

Murang'a East DEO Kaugi Micheni was forced to yield to demands by parents who threatened to withdraw their children from

school if the decision to move the head teacher to the neighbouring St Mary Primary School was not be reversed.

The DEO said he had revoked the transfer to allow continuity and completion of projects funded by government. "This just a temporary measure as we look for other workable options save the institu-

tion," said Kaugi

The move came shortly after a similar incident where parents of Githundi primary school forced the education Ministry to revoke the transfer of the head teacher.

The head teacher was to be moved to another school to allow investigations into claims of embezzling FPE funds.

State faulted over failure to restart Pan Paper

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

RESIDENTS in Bungoma County have blamed the collapse of Webuye-based Pan African Paper Mills to poor political leadership in Western Province.

The residents accuse politicians from the area of failing to push the Government to revive the paper plant.

Conceived in the late 1960s by the Government to utilize the vast forestry plantations to develop the Western region, what remains are cracked perimeter walls, rusting machinery and a bleak future.

Pan African Paper Mills started operations in 1974 as a joint venture between the Government and Industries who provided technical support.

Although the Government owned 34 percent shareholding, it was never involved in the appointment of competent

top management to run the firms as all technical decisions were made by the foreigners.

All top management and Board positions have been dominated by the foreigners for more than 20 years who have been earning huge sums of money as management and technology transfer fees regardless of whether the company was making profits or not.

Orient controls 29 per cent of the firm's shareholding, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) 24 percent and the East Africa Development Bank the remaining shares.

In 2008, the management presented a proposal to the cabinet requesting for 800 hectares of land on which to grow trees for the shifting from reliance on fuel oil to biomass.

A proposal was also made for the reduction of royalties from Kshs.700 per cubic meter of wood to Kshs.200 per cubic meter.

Until then, the Government

had allowed Pan Paper to harvest trees from Government forests at subsidized prices. Restrictions had also been imposed on imports of paper not manufactured by the company.

In its hey days, Pan paper made significant contributions to economic development by providing packaging material for vital sectors and writing and printing papers for exports.

In 2008, the Indian investors, who have been facing intense competition from importers following the liberalization of the market, have been unable to secure a Government bailout and have sneaked out of the firm.

By January 30, 2009, the pulp mill ceased operations owing to a Kshs.8 billion debt against a backdrop of a flagging economy.

Long term creditors were owed Kshs.6 million, while short-term lenders demanded more than Kshs.1.2 billion.

Sources say the mill had

run overdraft facilities at local banks amounting to Kshs.1.1 billion, while suppliers were owed another Kshs.1 billion.

Kenya Power was owed some Kshs.250 million, prompting the management to cut off supply.

A study by Mcinsey Consultants has discovered that the cost of fuel had almost doubled from Kshs.16,220 in 2003 to Kshs.30,276 in 2008 per litre where as that of power had risen from Kshs.4.90 to Kshs.7.80 per KWh by 2009.

A former head of the firm has been quoted as saying the increase in energy cost had contributed to the rise in import duty on fuel from Kshs.300 in 2004 to Kshs.600 per litre in 2008, forcing the firm to rely on fuel oil and KPLC for power. Alternative power sources such as coal have been availed to competitors in countries such as South Africa, Indonesia and Egypt.

Before closure, Pan Paper

was the only paper mill that supplied paper in the region. However, since suspending operations, other players have come on board putting the giant firm's future at stake.

Before closure, the economy of Webuye town and Bungoma County at large relied heavily on Pan Paper.

It employed 1,500 employees directly and another 30,000 directly depended on the factory.

But since its closure, Webuye town, which was once vibrant, has been dull and idle, with most shops closed. Rental houses have been vacated as the youth who were once employed by the mill turn to the Boda Boda business, while many others have turned to crime.

Insecurity in Webuye has also been on the rise in the past three years.

The closure has also affected waste paper suppliers, customers of finished products, log transporters, landlords and small vegetable sellers.

Dan Wanyama, a resident of Webuye town, says the Government needs to specifically set aside funds for the company's revival.

He says machines that were installed in early 1970s have become obsolete and the Government should invest in new machinery if the mill is to become globally competitive and avoid wasteful production processes.

Members of Parliament, he says, should discuss the future of the mill and put in place immediate measures to hasten its revival for the benefit of the County residents.

The residents say the mill should be revived immediately and a competent chief executive sourced locally to spearhead its rescue plan.

The company's fixed assets by 2009 were valued at Kshs.155 billion, while the mill's total contribution to the national economy between 2004 and 2009 was valued at Kshs.6,000 million.

Murang'a residents receive disability funds

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THIRTY persons with disability in Murang'a are set to benefit from a disbursement of Kshs135,000 under the disability kitty established by the government recently.

Most of the beneficiaries are drawn from Kiharu, Mathioya and Kangema constituencies in the programme currently being implemented on a pilot basis.

Murang'a North Region Gender and Social Development Officer Ms Mary Nyambura says each will receive Kshs 4,500 as the initial amount which is set to go up Kshs15,000.

Speaking during the launch of the programme, Nyambura says the kitty is meant to uplift the lives of the disabled in the community.

"Many of the beneficiaries have remained in their homes since childhood with some being left under the care of their mothers who are living in abject poverty," said Nyambura.

He said the pilot project will be rolled out to other areas if the initial phase becomes successful.



Webuye Pan Paper Mills: Poor political leadership is to be blamed for the collapse of the industry.

Poverty to blame for food security in Siaya

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

HIGH poverty level is a major cause of food insecurity in Siaya County.

Residents in the region can no longer afford the high cost of inputs, a senior researcher with the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) has said.

Dr. Francis Muyeko, the head of KARI's Kakamega Research Centre, says farmers in Siaya County and the environs cannot afford fertilizers,

certified seeds and other inputs, leading to poor harvests.

Addressing a recent Agricultural Field Day at Liganwa Village, Boro Division, Siaya District, the official said since most farmers grow one type of food crop, frequent hunger and shortage was prevalent.

Dr. Muyeko said the centre has come up with a variety seeds for cassava, sweet potatoes, finger millet and maize that are resistant to drought and the striga weed. They also mature faster and are there-

fore, ideal in dealing with food shortage.

He said they are carrying out programmes such as agroforestry and urged farmers to plant leguminous crops such as Soya beans to enhance soil fertility and ensure farmers use tolerant seeds for higher harvest.

He said through collaboration with Australian Centre for International Research, the organization will conduct research projects to advance agricultural and horticultural

yields to sustain food adequacy.

The researcher said moisture and nature of soil in Siaya favours the production of finger millet and wondered why farmers had neglected its large-scale production.

He said the expansion of Kisumu airport will boost the marketing of the produce with available transport for export. He encouraged farmers to engage in large-scale farming to take advantage of the opportunity.

Navakholo set to get grains store

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

PLANS are at an advance stage to construct a National Cereals and Produced Board (NCPB) store at Navakholo divisional headquarters in Kakamega County.

Navakholo stakeholders chair Mr. Ocah Oyalo has disclosed that construction work will start immediately once experts finalize the design. The project Mr. Oyalo adds is funded by the government through Economic stimulus programme (ESP) package.

Mr. Oyalo, however quickly points out that the two acre land on which the NCPB store will be constructed has been bought by the community. "This is meant to incorporate community ownership to the project hence guard it against mismanagement," he adds.

Mr. Oyalo could not however, immediately disclose how much money has been earmarked for the project and its storage capacity.

"We will know the exact amount earmarked for the project and its capacity once the design work is complete and request for expression of interest advertised", he says. He notes with pride that once the storage becomes operational, farmers in the area will access Government's subsidized fertilizers with ease.

It is imperative to note that a 50 kilogram bag of DAP fertilizer is being sold at Kshs. 2,500 in all NCPB stores in the country while the same quantity is sold at between Kshs. 3,500 to Kshs. 3,800 by other stockist. Mr. Oyalo at the same time says that the proposed NCPB store will enable farmers in the area to store their maize immediately after harvest, hence save them from post harvest losses.

He challenges the area MP Mr. Manyala Keya to use the Kshs. 20 million constituency roads fund to improve infrastructure in the area so that farmers can deliver their produce to the NCPB with ease.

The chair notes with regrets that Kakamega County does not have adequate agricultural extension officers. He observes that for farmers to make good use of the NCPB, the Government should employ more agriculture officers and provide them with means of transport so that they can reach all the farmers.

This, he adds would enable most farmers to receive technical advice from the agricultural extension officers and hence improve crop husbandry/yields.

Mombasa port set for major facelift

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

PLANS are underway to give a facelift to the port of Mombasa to cater for enhanced seaborne trade.

Already, the entrance channel and container facilities are being expanded to accommodate bigger vessels.

The commencement of the dredging of Kilindini channel and the construction of Berth 19 and an adjacent container stacking yard last month will allow the facility to handle bigger container ships and expand container handling facilities.

The dredging is expected to increase the depth of the access channel and widen it to 300 metres at its narrowest point to enable the docking of bigger vessels.

The undertaking of the two major projects which is expected to be completed in 18 months is set to improve operations and service delivery thereby increasing the port's competitiveness in the region.

The Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) chairman, Mr. Shukri Barmadi, says the upgrade will enhance the harbour's capacity to offer world-class service.

Mr. Barmadi says the twin projects are key in meeting the growing import/export trade.

Transport Minister, Mr. Amos Kimunya, who commissioned the two Vision 2030 flagship projects last month said they are part of elaborate plans to ensure the trade and economy in the Eastern Africa region is facilitated by efficient transport systems.

Mr. Kimunya said the Government with the support of the Japanese government will soon construct a new container terminal in three phases.

"The designs of the 1.2 million Twenty Foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) capacity terminal are ready and the contractor is expected on site late this year," said Mr. Kimunya.

The minister said the Government has embarked on implementing the National Window System, a project that is being funded by the World Bank.



The Mombasa Port. Container handling capacity is expected to enhance the facility. Photo/File



Mr. Kimunya, Transport minister

The project targets the establishment of a single window electronic paper processing platform for cargo clearance through the port.

"This move will drastically reduce the period it takes to clear cargo from the port and enhance general efficiency," said Mr. Kimunya.

KPA Managing Director, Mr.

Gichiri Ndua, said the dredging project and the construction of Berth 19 at the water front funded by the Government to the tune of Kshs10 billion will expand the trans-shipment capacity.

Mr. Ndua said construction work at Berth 19 by the China Roads and Bridge Corporation will not interfere with container flow since adequate measures have been put in place with the acquisition of modern equipment.

He said three ships to shore cranes that transport containers from ship to land and two harbour mobile cranes have been procured to ensure work is not interrupted.

The MD said the terminal now undergoing refurbishment and expansion was set up in 1980 and was initially meant to handle 30,000 TEUs but was now handling 250,000 TEUs, thus straining the capacity of the facility.

Mr. Ndua said the berth being expanded was initially designed to accommodate ships 180 metres long but most of the ships docking at the facility today measure 230 metres.

Sigalaga-Butere road set for tarmacking

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government wants people living along Sigalagala-Butere-Sidindi Road to uproot structures along the road ahead of its tarmacking.

Kakamega South DC Philip Nzungo said residents who had encroached along the road reserve must relocate to pave way for the much awaited construction works. Residents had cast doubts on the Kshs1.8 billion project, as it was commissioned during by-election campaigns in Ikolomani.

They had feared that the funds would be diverted elsewhere because Prime Minister Raila Odinga's candidate Bernard Shinali lost in the elections. Raila commissioned the project at the height of the campaigns.

Nzungo said the contractor is on the ground and working. The DC said those with kiosks, trees and other structures on the road reserve are ready to pave way for the contractor.

"The residents are excited about the project. They have promised to support the contractor fully," Nzungo said after holding a meeting with locals at Isulu area.

Area MP Bonny Khalwale, civic leaders and the business community also attended the meeting. During his campaigns, Dr Khalwale had vowed to ensure the road is tarmacked even if ODM lost in the elections.

Parliamentary Committee on Transport assured residents of Kakamega County that tarmacking of Sigalagala-Butere-Sidindi road will not be abandoned after the end of Ikolomani by-election campaigns.

Committee chairman David Were explained that the committee is working with the Ministry of Roads to ensure residents of the region do not become victims of political campaigns.

Raila launched the project during the campaigns in a bid to woo the voters to back the ODM candidate. Earth-movers that were used on the material day went missing for a while.

Church rises up against gender violence

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) has embarked on a project that seeks to address increased cases of gender based violence in Mumias District.

The church through its development arm, Western Region Christian Community Services (WRCCS), seeks to enhance community responsiveness to gender-based violence.

The move comes as police statistics in the area paint a grim picture with an average of seven

gender violence cases being reported on a weekly basis as health facilities attend to an average of two cases every week. Similarly, the children's department in East Wanga receives an average of three gender based violence cases.

In an exclusive interview with The Link recently, the Project Coordinator, Western Province Peter Mudy says the project has three specific objectives which entails strengthening the capacity of 30 police officers and 60 health workers to effectively manage sexual violence cases in the area.

Further about 3,000 women will be trained to effectively handle sexual violence survivors and to train 30 community focal persons to acquire skills and tools to fight gender based violence targeting vulnerable groups which include people with special needs, people living with HIV/AIDS, girl child and the boy child," explains the project coordinator.

He at the same time adds that the initiative has created a good working relationship between the local community, paralegals and the police adding that there is an

increase in the number of gender-related violence cases being reported at the gender desk at the Mumias police station and at the grassroots level.

"The church saw the need to initiate this noble project following an upsurge in gender related violence in Mumias District with more women and girls being sexually abused," said Mudy, adding that gender based violence is one of the vices that has continued to afflict and stigmatize poor rural women and the girl child in Mumias district.

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

Malaria voted leading killer of women, children

MALARIA remains the leading cause of deaths registered among children under five years and pregnant mothers, Kenya NGOs Alliance Against Malaria (KeNAAM) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr. Edward Mwangi, has said.

Mr. Mwangi said the National Malaria Policy 2010 shows the disease accounts for 30-50 per cent of all outpatient cases and 20 per cent of all admissions to health facilities.

The CEO says about 170 million working days are lost to the disease annually.

Mr. Mwangi said Malaria can only be defeated if the population at risk is empowered with effective tools that are sustainable at community level.

"KfAC presents this opportunity to showcase what is working, where and what tools can influence policy and decision making to sustain the gains recorded in the last 10 years," the KeNAAM CEO said.

It will provide chance for strengthened linkages, collaboration and networking among NGOs, Government, private sector, researchers, students, multilateral and bilateral partners.

KeNAAM Communications Officer, Ms. Njeri Kimani, said KfAC unites communities in the sharing, discussing and showcasing innovations in Malaria intervention strategies



A ward of Malaria patients in a public hospital. Photo/File

and programme outcomes.

Kimani said the 6th KfAC has been supported by USAid-funded "Komesha Malaria Communities Project" that targets contribution to the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI)

goal of reducing mortality by 50 per cent in the project site.

The three-day Conference whose theme is "Sustaining Community Partnership in Fighting Malaria" will share information, expertise and

challenges faced in the fight against Malaria at community level, Kimani said.

"Over the years, KfAC has brought together researchers, practitioners, academicians and advocates to share experiences in the implementation of programmes at community level," she said.

The event promises to bring together experts from across the world to interact with the community and provide a platform for advocacy and capacity building partnerships.

Kimani said presenters will be from Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Ghana, Ethiopia and Nigeria, and participants from Asia, Europe, America, Middle East and Africa.

With a vision for a Malaria Free Kenya, KeNAAM is a national network of private sector, NGOs, FBOs and CBOs. Its mission is Total Commitment to supporting the equitable realization and sustainability of Abuja goals and Millennium Development goals 4, 5, 6 and 8 in Kenya through syneric scaling up of Roll Back Malaria (RBM) interventions.

Male cut flourishing in Nyanza

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

ABOUT 290,000 males have so far been circumcised in Luo Nyanza following the government initiative on Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC).

Addressing a two-day workshop recently at the Homa Bay Agricultural Training Centre, the Provincial Director of Public Health and Sanitation, Dr. Jackson Kioko, said the figure was still below the 480,000 beneficiaries of the programme that are expected to be cut by 2014.

Dr. Kioko says they have adopted the latest circumcision technology known as Shung Ring from China as a means of speeding up the exercise.

The two-day workshop had 30 participants who included the District Public Health Officers and Community Health Workers drawn from the six districts within the County of Homa Bay.

Dr. Kioko said the Shung-Ring circumcision strategy is under a pilot study at Homa Bay and Siaya district hospitals. It has been sponsored by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) known as Engender health.

The Director said if it proves successful, the technology would be rolled out to the other districts across the country.

He said they have introduced

moonlight male circumcision services for men who fear lining up with the youth, saying such services were being offered in

Kisumu, Homa Bay and Siaya with the assistance of another NGO known as Aphia plus Nyanza.



Circumcision: New technology from China to speed up the exercise.

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Fight against diabetes begins in hospitals

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Government is currently in the process of implementing a National Diabetes Comprehensive Care Programme which will help to prevent and control diabetes and other non communicable diseases.

Public Health Minister Beth Mugo said the programme is already being implemented in all the 10 level five hospitals and 68 district hospitals country-wide to help control such diseases like diabetes and other non communicable diseases such as heart diseases, stroke, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases which are currently the leading causes of death and disability in the world.

“Through this programme, the facilities are running clinic where people with diabetes are attended to on daily basis. As a ministry, we are not sparing any effort in facing the challenge of diabetes and other non communicable diseases,” said the minister.

Last year, the Ministry launched the National Diabetes Strategy which guides all actors in their activities.

The ministry has also developed and disseminated clinical guidelines and protocols for diabetes management throughout the country.

The minister said this during the official launch of the Mweiga Diabetes Support Group at the



Public Health Minister, Beth Mugo (right), observes keenly as a patient is tested for blood pressure at Mary Immaculate Hospital in Mweiga town recently during the launch of Mweiga Diabetic Support Group. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Mary Immaculate Mission Hospital in Kieni West district recently.

Currently diabetes is one of the most common non-communicable diseases and is now a major public health threat not only in the country but also across the world.

The disease is fast becoming a world pandemic with over 285 million people having diabetes globally and this number is projected to rise to more than 400 million by the year 2030.

In Kenya, the burden of non communicable diseases is rising every year. Non communicable diseases are the reason behind 50 per cent of all inpatient admissions in our public hospitals and contribute to over 55 per cent of all hospital deaths recorded in the country.

“Our population is under threat of the new epidemic of chronic non communicable diseases considering over 37 per cent of the population has high blood pressure and 12.7 per cent are suffering from cardiovascular diseases. The increase in diabetes has been occasioned by increase in exposure to risk factors for non communicable diseases,” she added.

She however said this 80 per cent of all type diabetes can be prevented through interventions in an individual’s way of life.

“Lifestyle issues can be changed through behavioural change. Some interventions include tobacco use cessation, avoidance of alcohol and eating foods that have plenty of fiber, vegetables and fruits, avoiding high salt and high fat diets and increasing physical activity. These simple practices would a long way in bringing down the burden of diabetes and other non communicable diseases,” she cautioned.

She was accompanied by area Hon MP Nemesys Warugongo, director of non communicable diseases Mr William Maina, area DC Mr Abdi Mohammed and Nyeri County Council chairman Mr Wachira Maina Keen.

The prevention and control of non-communicable diseases needs a multi-sectoral approach as the determinants of these diseases go beyond health dimensions.

Busia County receives cash for food security

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

The Government with support from Finland has earmarked Kshs.3 billion for the implementation of a five year programme that seeks to address food insecurity in the Busia County.

The initiative dubbed “Programme for Agriculture and Livelihood in Western Communities” (PALWECO) aims at improving the living standards and livelihoods of people in Busia County.

According to the programme director Sakwa Mwangala, the initiative will adopt a multi-sectoral and rural development approach to help alleviate poverty in the seven districts of Busia County namely Teso South, Teso North, Nambale, Busia, Samia, Butula and Bunyala adding that the programme commenced in November last year and will run up to 2015.

The programme is also designed to promote the rights and status of the Vulnerable Groups who include women and girls, the rights of groups that are easily excluded particularly children, youth, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, indigenous people and ethnic minorities and combating Hiv/Aids as a social health problem.

The project advisor, Eng. James Agingu at the same time reveals that markets in the area are poorly maintained and that majority do not function efficiently to channel the produce and goods to the consumers.

“Palweco will therefore work to improve market infrastructure for cost-effective, secure and hygienic transactions of food products including fresh food and dairy products,” said Agingu.

Nyong’o promises to help Mwala District hospital

By PETER MUTUKU

SERVICES at Mwala District hospital have almost ground to a halt for lack of essential facilities. The hospital lacks an X-ray machine, operation theatre, inadequate wards and a mortuary.

Further the hospital does not have physiotherapy and occupational therapy equipment as well as an incinerator to cater for disposal of medical waste.

The situation has been compounded by lack of adequate funding and land for expansion.

Plans to expand the hospital have been thwarted by lack of land as pressure mounts on the hospital management board to acquire additional land to create room for the intended expansion.

According to the hospital’s Management Board Chairman Mr Paul Mbatha, the hospital requires an additional

five acres of land to accommodate the proposed plan which include the establishment of a medical training college.

Mr Mbatha said the college was a timely development which will help accommodate the large number of school leavers in Mwala and the neighbouring Districts of Yatta, Kagundo, Lower Mbooni and Kitui West.

The Board chairman appeals to the government to allocate additional funds to the hospital to help in the construction of addi-

tional wards.

Other facilities required at the hospital include a twin theatre, twin ward, kitchen, laundry, administration block, stores, incinerator for catering for disposal of medical waste and a mortuary.

He spoke as the Medical Services Minister Anyang Nyong’o promised to assist the hospital acquire additional land to pave for the establishment of a medical training college.

The Minister who toured the facility recently also pledged to have an X-ray machine installed immediately.

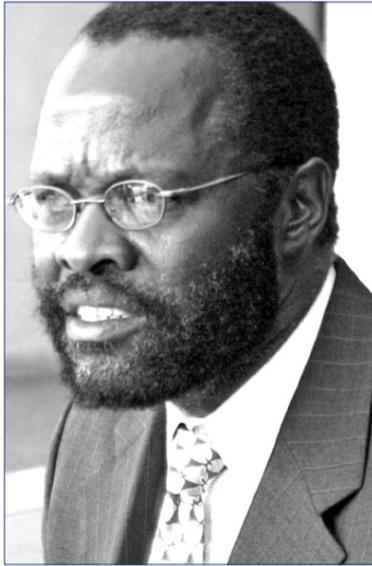
During the tour, the outgoing Medical Officer of Health, Dr Tracey John said that the hospital is only able offer limited services to the public due to lack of essential facilities.

“This facility was upgraded to a District status in 2007 but retained the level of a health centre in terms of facilities and infrastructure,” she explains.

She says lack of an operating theater, the required wards, diagnostic and scanning machines are among the most pressing concerns.

Dr John says the limitations including poor road network was to blame for the higher number of deaths registered in the area.

She reveals that some residents among them pregnant women have to walk for over 10 kilometers in search of medical



Prof. Anyang’ Nyong’o, Medical Services Minister

services at the facility.

“The inadequate facilities are an affirmation to the many referrals we make to Machakos Level Five Hospital, which is 50 kilometers way and the Kenyatta Hospital.

“Washing is done manually and this exposes casual workers to higher risks of infection,” she adds.

She points out that malaria, pneumonia, maternal, skin, eye and urinary tract infections, intestinal infestations and dental conditions are the common ailments in the District.

Understaffing, she adds is a

Saccos ordered to adopt new deposit system

By PETER MUTUKU

SACCOS have been ordered to stop Front Office Service Activities (FOSA) following the launch of a new framework for deposit-taking.

The move is in pursuant of provisions espoused in Vision 2030 that establish a prudent regulation of deposit taking by Sacco societies to enhance transparency among the 219 Sacco societies authorized to operate Front Office Service activities (FOSA).

It is also consistent with the on-

going reforms in the financial sector whose ultimate aim is to expand financial access, encourage efficiency and enhance financial stability of financial service providers in Kenya.

Over the last one year, the Sacco Societies Act and the Regulations have required Sacco societies that were already operating FOSA facilities to apply for licenses from the Sacco Societies Regulatory Authority (SASRA) but only 199 applied for licenses, 13 communicated their intention to discontinue FOSA services

while seven did not submit applications by the deadline of June 17, 2011.

Information from SASRA indicates that of the 199 applicants, forty five (45) were licensed by June 30, fifty five (55) had been issued with letters of intent as an approval of meeting the minimum licensing requirements as stipulated in the Regulations.

While there have been several reform initiatives in Sacco subsector in the past, the introduction of a Sacco specific law is recognition of

the unique financial intermediation function that Sacco societies play in an economy.

The operational regulations and performance standards are specific and prescriptive. They are not to make Sacco societies non competitive and stifle their growth but to ensure that they operate and grow within a framework that promotes sound financial business and management practices.

Financially strong, well governed deposit taking Sacco societies are

necessary to expand financial access through deposit services and credit provision for personal and enterprise development.

As a new law, it is certain to bring challenges and impact on the Sacco societies in different ways and extent. It is the responsibility of the board of directors and the management to analyze their business reality against the operational regulations and prudential standards and develop strategies for consideration by the Authority as part of the licensing process.

Kisauni CDF committee on exchange visit to Nyeri

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

KISAUNI Constituency Development Fund Committee members toured projects done by their Nyeri counterparts in a bid to adopt to good practices.

During a one day visit to the area, Kisauni members who were led by their chairman Mr Hamisi Mwanguya were happy to see how the funds have benefited Nyeri town residents owing to good management practices.

The seven member team traversed the constituency, visited over five projects and acknowledged their good work. The team was hosted by the area MP who is also the Special Programmes Minister Hon Esther Murugi, the local CDF committee led by Chairman Mr Ndegwa Muriithi and

Secretary Baragu Mutahi.

Nyeri Mayor Mr Joseph Muteru, deputy mayor Mrs Grace Wanyeki and a battery of councilors accompanied them. They were impressed by a 15-deep feet permanent and modern toilets at Gitathi-ini Primary School.

The toilets which have been made using concrete from bottom to the top are cheaper and effective.

Once they are full they are emptied using an exhauster and so can last for many years. The team said they will put up a similar project in their constituency as it was a noble one.

Kisauni CDF Funds Account Manager Mrs Monicah Mwai said she was also surprised that the constituency has enough piped water to take the residents for years.

The Minister said they will also visit Kisauni constituency to familiarize themselves with some of the model practices in the area.

She attributed the successful implementation of projects in the area to regular monitoring of funds disbursed to respective projects to curb on wastage and corruption.

Murugi however blamed the delay in completing projects to inability by the National Management Board on CDF to release projects funds on time.

"Sometimes the funds delay for even two years instead of about six months thus delaying the completion of projects which could have benefited the residents immediately," lamented the minister.



Murugi (centre) with Kisauni CDF chairman Hamisi Mwanguya (left) and councilor Mr Amur Abdalla who is a Kisauni CDF member after touring Kihatha Secondary School dining hall. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

The signboards showing how much has been allocated in various projects are sometimes removed by unscrupulous people who sell them to scrap metal dealers thus a challenge in the area. Kisauni CDF chairman Mwanguya said that their constituency has invested more on IT and has computerized all the schools and colleges

in the area an issue which could be emulated in Nyeri town.

Other members who were in the tour included Amur Abdalla (member), Mr Zenudin Ali Mohammed (treasurer), Mr Fredrick Odiambo (member), Mrs Roseline Oganda (Project Coordinator) and Naseam Ramzau (administrator).

In the 2010/2011 financial year, Kisauni which has a population of 700,000 received Kshs 57 million while Nyeri Town with a population of 250,000 was given Kshs 52 million.

The tour comes after another tour by legislators from Southern Sudan who had visited the constituency for a similar mission in November last year.

Mumias to start producing ethanol

By TITUS MAERO

THE Mumias Sugar Company (MSC) plans to commission a new plant at the end of this year with a production capacity of 20 million litres per annum.

The Company's Head of Corporate Affairs Mrs Pamela Lutta said the multi-million shilling plant is part of the company's plan to diversify its revenue sources to cushion it against competition from Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) sugar producing countries, once the two year safe guard period come to an end next year.

The safeguard period was extended following a successful application by the Kenyan Government to enable the sugar industry re-organize its operations to compete favourably with other COMESA sugar producing countries in zero tariff market in the region.

The Corporate Affairs Manger further announced that the company plans to venture into water bottling business, produce electricity by recycling waste into biogas to generate power for domestic use and sale to the national grid.

Embu firewood group are all smiles

By PETER MUTUKU

A SELF help group in Embu County is smiling all the way to the bank after an initiative launched seven years ago began bearing fruits.

The firewood collection self help group located at the border of Mt Kenya forest is raking millions of shillings after investing in the production of indigenous tree seedlings.

Wangu Environmental Conservation Group that neighbours Irangi Forest has produced over 60,000 indigenous seedlings annually between 2008 and 2010.

The seedlings are sold to Mt Kenya East pilot project (MKEPP) for the rehabilitation of the resource.

Wangu SHG, which literally

means firewood in Kiambu, was started in 2003 as an organized group of firewood collectors with a membership of 115.

In February 2004, the group resolved to explore their luck in the production of tree seedlings. The members then approached the Irangi forest station head who agreed to release a portion of forestland for a seedlings nursery. Each member contributed Kshs5.00 for the purchase of polythene bags and other inputs.

Each member was also expected to work at the site once a week.

The following year, the group led by the chairlady, Mrs Wanjagi Njiru, raised the seedlings production to 25,000 but lack of ready market discouraged some members who pulled out. The move forced the remaining group

to contribute more money to bridge the deficit.

Things started looking up when the women group joined hands with Mt Kenya East Pilot Project (MKEPP) for rehabilitation activities.

The group produces over 150,000 seedlings annually.

The Secretary Mrs Pennina Muthoni says that in 2005, the group managed to produce 5,000 indigenous seedlings.

These comprised mainly Podocarpus at Magacha site within Irangi Forest station that generated Kshs51,150 and 60,000 indigenous seedlings annually to MKEPP.

The team has assisted in the rehabilitation of 213.5 hectares of the forest and generated Kshs2.8 million from seedlings sale and

provision of casual labour during planting and maintaining rehabilitated areas.

Muthoni says community groups have been formed such as Young Wangu group and mazingira among others.

Bee keeping activities have improved with groups earning income from the rehabilitation of forests such as Magacha which had been destroyed.

They have also diversified their activities by embarking on fish farming, rabbit rearing and initiating village savings unions that give loans to members at a small interest.

Muthoni says that the project has ensured improved standards of living with children being able to attend school without interruption.

Kwale residents urged to harvest rainwater

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

RAINWATER harvesting remains a critical factor in resolving the perennial food shortage afflicting Kinango residents, in Kwale County.

Experts in agriculture and water management say that although the area receives inadequate rainfall to sustain normal agricultural activities, there is enough rain water to sustain harvest for domestic use, livestock and irrigation.

The Kinango Water Management Officer, Mr. Clement Mukulia, says water collected from roof catchments into tanks and earth dams will help the community to meet its needs.

Mukulia says collecting rain water cuts the distance residents have to trek in search of the commodity. The harvested water helps sustain the community longer before members can be bailed out through relief supplies from the Government and other stakeholders.

The Kinango Agricultural Officer, Mr. Wanje Ziro, says harvesting rain water ensures better food production in areas where agricultural production would otherwise be impossible. He says farmers harvest water in earth dams for the production of tomatoes, egg plants, sweet pepper and other vegetables in a hostile, semi and parts of the County.

During a recent agriculture exhibition held in Kinango, farmers were treated to water harvesting instructions and technology at a stand put up by the World Agro-Forestry Centre situated at ICRAF. That farmers were hungry for rain water conservation skills was evident going by the large number of those who



A dam created by farmers for the irrigation of surrounding farms.

milled the stand as they perused the available literature.

Farmers listened keenly as Mr. Kiptony Cherogony, an engineer with a passion for water conservation technology, explained why rain water collection should be part of their daily lives. Mr. Cherogony says communities need to view rain water as a resource that must be safeguarded. He says at the World Agro-Forestry Center, research has been carried out to identify the best practices for communities to implement alone or with other stakeholders.

Many community members of-

ten take rain as a means of growing crops and pasture for animals. But Mr. Cherogony says rain water conservation should be incorporated into every aspect of a community's livelihood. To achieve this, the World Agro-Forestry Center has been sourcing for efficient methods of enabling communities to meet the objective.

The many methods of conserving rain water are used to ensure it does not flow away into the sea. Mr. Cherogony says through prudent land use, surface run-off can be reduced and the water used by farmers

to plant rows of suitable trees to provide a break in surface water run-off on sloppy land.

The trees, he adds, can provide farmers with fodder for livestock while simultaneously fertilizing the soil.

Wanje says farmers can trap surface run-off on the farms to retain moisture in the soil for longer, thus providing crops with the required moisture for growth. The officer says terracing and crop stripping on sloppy land are methods that farmers have been trained on and successfully used to conserve water in the soil.

During a farmer's field tour, Kinango farmers were taken to their counterparts in the drier Kinango hinterland to witness examples of farmers who have used the methods to retain water on their farms with much success.

John Gitumu, a farmer at Taita, Vigurungani location, says he has harvested more crops on learning how to prevent water run-off from his land. He combines strips of different crops with land that has been left fallow. He puts trenches and terraces along the length of each strip to slow down the water.

Another farmer, Mr. Francis Mulingwa, says there was need to pay attention to weather changes and adopt strategies to suit the variations. He says using terraces not only harvest water along the terrace bench and control erosion. Soil nutrients are also conserved.

The DAO says farmers can also plant crops in sunken beds to act like water basins for pooling water around plant roots during rainy season or after irrigation. This ensures rain water settles where it is needed instead of running off to waste.

Another method of harvesting that experts concur is effective includes the construction of water pans or earth dams. Kinango DAO says earth dams used for irrigation enable farmers to grow vegetables that would not ordinarily have thrived in a harsh environment. Wanje says water reservoirs can be excavated with successive rains to enable farmers achieve self sufficiency in water available.

Mr. Edward Mutisya, a farmer who was visited during the field tour, has two earth dams on his farm.

Coffee production drops due to poor weather

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

COFFEE production in the country has decreased due to poor weather, according to the Coffee Board of Kenya Managing Director, Mrs Loise Njeru, has said

Mrs Njeru said recently that they are expecting about 41,000 metric tonnes this year compared to 42,000 metric tonnes produced last year.

"This decrease in one metric tonne can be attributed to bad weather in the country which was unpredictable," she explained. Njeru was speaking at Kimathi University College in Nyeri County during the official opening of a three-day-coffee conference. "This year's coffee production is not very good and we expect a decrease due to bad weather," said the MD.

He called upon the coffee farmers in the country to improve on quality and quantity adding that Kenya produces only one per cent of what is produced globally. She at the same time warned that the board will not hesitate to cancel licenses for millers engaged in illegal dealings.

The MD disclosed that already two millers who were engaged in illegal coffee dealings have been deregistered and issued a stern warning that others will face the same consequences. "The board cancelled the licenses of the two millers last year due to illegal dealings and we shall continue to discipline those millers who are involved in the dealings," She added.

She said the CBK is waiting for a ministerial statement to know the



Mr. Eutacyus Muchiri harvests coffee at his Othaya home in Nyeri County recently. Coffee production in the country dropped due to poor weather. photo/Joseph Mukubwa

quantity of coffee which has been stolen from the coffee factories in the recent past.

Farmers were urged to cooperate with the police in order to curb regular theft of coffee beans in the various factories. The coffee dealers and

farmers were also urged to start coffee shops in the various towns so that the rate of consumption can rise.

Farmers have also been facilitated by the CBK in order to increase the value addition of their crops. The three-day-coffee conference whose

theme was 'promoting accountability, sustainability and opportunity in the Coffee Sector' is aimed to improve market information and availability.

She was accompanied by Principal of the University College Mr Ndirangu Kioni and his two deputies Mr Ger-

ald Muthakia and Mr Moses Gachari.

Several organizations are sponsoring the workshop which includes the university college, Kenya Coffee Producers Association, African Wildlife Foundation and Hivos People Unlimited among others.

By KAVYU-KURA

CASSAVA menu is in the process of replacing maize as the staple food in most households in the nine districts of Makueni County.

With the global climate change leading to reduced rainfall especially in arid and semi arid areas, residents of Ukambani region are slowly adopting new eating habits in line with the availability of food crops that conform to the changing climatic conditions.

Farmers in the region have of late taken up the cultivation of drought resistant crops that easily survive harsh climatic conditions. Consequently, the farming of the cassava crop is replacing maize as has been witnessed in lowland of Makueni County.

Farm Concern International, a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) has been assisting a local community to set up a cassava processing plant in Mbuvo location in Kitise Division of Kathonzweni district in response to increased attention given to cassava farming.

The NGO's project manager Kennedy Okech recently noted at Mbuvo that the cassava processing machine would benefit thousands of small scale farmers engaging in cassava farming in the Kathonzweni and throughout Makueni County.

Okech who spoke to over 460 cassava farmers from Mbuvo Commercial Village when he handed over a mobile cassava chipper machine valued at Kshs185,000 to local farmers, described cassava as poverty and drought fighter.

The donation of the chipper machine to Mbuvo cassava village processing project is part of the Farm Concern International intervention to support small holders' farmers in east and central Africa aimed at promoting the cassava production.

Scientists refer cassava as 'survivor crop', a typical tropical plant that can be grown where annual rainfall is as low as 500mm, and has ability to withstand prolonged periods of drought.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of United Nations, points out unique cultivation characteristic and practices of cassava among them

Cassava meal gaining popularity in Makueni



An agricultural officer explains many of the food products of cassava. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

the fact that it can be grown on soils of relative low fertility.

FAO adds that cassava can also be produced as an economic crop on soils so depleted by repeated cultivation that they are unsuitable for other crops and that during dry seasons, the cassava plant undergoes a spell of dormancy and growth resumes when rains begin.

Oketch promised further support in setting up cassava driers to Mbuvo villagers at farm levels to facilitate proper storage of the chipped cassava before transportation to the process-

ing unit. He said that Farm Concern International would link the Mbuvo Commercial Village farmers to buyers in efforts to transform them into commercial cassava farmers besides increasing food security in the semi arid region.

"Our intention is to elevate cassava to a mainstream commercial crop due to its wide range of products which includes starch processing, flour (human food), animal feeds, cassava chips, glue processing and snacks such as crisps." Oketch said.

He encouraged the local farmers

to engage in mass production of cassava saying that it conforms to local climate and could help change their livelihood in addressing their food insecurity problems.

The chairman of the Mbuvo Commercial Village Joseph Masyuki disclosed that Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) that also supports the farmers' groups, had also pledged to donate a cassava milling machine to his group. In the past, he noted that KARI sold 32,315 of a new variety of cassava cuttings to the farmers at subsidized prices.

New seed maize varieties launched

By TITUS MAERO

FOUR new varieties of maize seeds that can thrive in different ecological zones have been introduced in the country.

The new seeds have been developed by Agri-Seed Company (ASC) Limited which operates mainly from South Africa.

The Company's Country Manager Mr Kassim Owino named the varieties as SC-Duma 43, SC Duma Milia 53, SC Somba 61 and Tembo 73, which he said, mature in about 100 days with yields ranging from 15 to 30 bags per acre.

Owino told reporters in Kakamega town, that the entry of Agri Seed Company in the Kenyan market will provide local maize farmers with alternative source of quality maize seeds to save them from disappointments occasioned by shortage in seeds at the start of the planting season.

This year, Kenya Seed Company (KSC) Limited, which has been the traditional supplier of quality maize seeds to local farmers failed to supply the seeds in time at the beginning of the planting season due to shortage of maize seed.

According to Agriculture researchers the shortage of the seeds is likely to affect production of maize this year as farmers ended up planting low quality seeds which are not treated to withstand disease and pest attacks.

Owino said Agri Seed Company is selling its product through the official maize outlets in the country, noting that in Kenya the varieties have been tested and proved suitable for western, Central, Rift Valley and Nyanza regions.

The new varieties were exhibited to farmers last month at the Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) Kakamega show, where many farmers made inquiries on how to get the seeds after they saw the good yields on a demonstration plot at the company's stand.

Farmers vow to revive finger millet farming

By JOEL JUMA

OVER 1200 farmers in Busia County have resolved to revive finger millet farming following the introduction of early maturing varieties.

The farmers drawn from 300 groups said the new varieties developed by Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and International Crop Research for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) offer better yields than the traditional types.

Speaking during a field's day at Alupe, the farmers led by Joseph Moding said all farmers who tried the eight new varieties introduced to them by Harnessing Opportunity Productivity Enhancement (HOPE) foundation have recorded an improved harvest from the farms.

America billionaire Bill Gates funds the foundation. "The crop varieties introduced to us by HOPE Foundation have matured within 90 days giving all farmers impressive yields because the crops were not affected by poor rainfall," said Mr Moding.

He affirmed that farmers are likely to harvest over eight bags per acre, five more than what they have been getting. He said Participatory Variety Selection (PVS) process introduced by the Bill Gates Foundation allowed farmers to identify the kind of seeds suitable for

their farms making it more acceptable. Patrick Audi, a researcher with ICRISAT said most of the finger millets varieties available to the local farmers were ideal for the area.

He said finger millet farmers for a long time have not been able to benefit from the crops because they were using seeds which were susceptible to diseases and had a long maturing period. "The current poor and unpredictable weather conditions has not helped either as most crops in the farms wilt before maturing due to lack of water," said Audi.

He said eight new varieties that include Gulu E, Seremi 1, U15, Okhale 1, P224, KNE 648, IE 4115 and Ikhule are supplied for free to registered farmers groups in Teso, Mumias Siaya and Kisii. "This will help encourage other farmers to embrace the new seeds and get better yields," said Audi.

Audi affirmed that the foundation was actively engaged in reviving of the finger millet farming in Western, Nyanza and Eastern provinces.

He said the organisation was also involved in linking successful farmers with potential buyers so as to ensure that middlemen do not exploit farmers. The organisation encourages direct negotiation between farmers and buyers so as to reduce the chain of production which usually does not work in favour of the farmer," he said.



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Dairy firm set to build multi-million processing plant

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MUKURWE-INI Wakulima Dairy Ltd is building a Kshs100 million processing plant. The plant which started recently is set to be fully operational by December this year once the machines are availed.

Speaking at Kiriti stadium in Mukurwe-ini town during the 21st Annual General Meeting, the company chairman Mr Muhika Mutahi says that the plant will help the company to take charge of their products from production to the market end of the dairy chain.

The company which collects 40,000 liters per day will now be processing their milk.

For the last two decades, the company has been collecting the milk and delivers it to the New KCC Company and the Brookside Dairy company.

"The 17,000 members are very happy about the project as they will now be equal with Githunguri Company in Kiambu County which processes its own milk. This will also save a lot of money which will in return be paid to farmers," the chairman adds after the ground breaking ceremony.

The company collects milk from Mukurwe-ini, Othaya and Tetu districts. Farmers have been urged to purchase shares in big numbers so that the company can raise money to complete the project instead of them borrowing loans in banks.

"However, the mobilization of the share capital for the completion of the project poses the major challenge as the response for the additional shares from the shareholders has not been forthcoming as expected. I urge all of you to support this noble project by stepping up share contributions to raise adequate capital to procure the processing machinery," Mutahi added.

Last year, the company spent a sum of Kshs 17 million in capital expenditure. The bulk of the investment was directed towards the completion of the ultramodern Head Office Complex and the replacement of the ageing fleet of trucks. The company also improved on its information technology infrastructure by networking its new Head Office complex in town.

"As indicated in my annual report for year 2009, the company ventured

into poultry and swine feeds production during the year 2010 which further enhanced the animal feeds performance," he added.

The average milk payment rate to the farmers per Kilogram of milk delivered marginally dropped to Kshs20.33 in year 2010 compared to Kshs23.25 in the year 2009.

"This is despite the decline in dairy turnover from Kshs270 million in year 2009 to Kshs250 million in year

2010. This was due to the deliberate board decision to cushion the farmers against the adverse price effect following glut in production," he added.

Poor roads infrastructure has also been a major challenge in the milk industry as some roads are inaccessible and trucks get worn out.

He at the same time challenged the Government to re-introduce school milk programme so that they can increase market of their products.



Farmers collecting their payments at Mukurwe-ini Wakulima Dairy Ltd offices recently.
Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Nyeri farmers want guarantees on cash crops

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

FARMERS from Nyeri County want the government to provide a Guaranteed Minimum Return (GMR) for the cash crops produced in the area to cushion them from losses

The tea and coffee farmers said the area was wholly dependent on the two crops since there are no industries to provide for alternative employment.

While airing their views before members of the Parliamentary Committee on budget in Nyeri recently, the farmers said the government should come up with ways to cushion them from harsh climatic conditions and in cases of glut.

"The government should also ensure farmers get farm inputs at subsidized prices and establish better markets for the produce," said Mrs Mary Wanjugu, a coffee farmer from Tetu in Nyeri.

Another participant Mrs Mary Njoki said the Economic Stimulus Programme projects should be initiated when proper considerations have been done to avoid replication.

Njoki also asserted distribution of public funds should be equally done in all areas considering the number of people living there.

The issue of youth unemployment took center stage with participants calling for creation of industries which will in turn offer employment opportunities to the group that constitutes more than 60% of the country's population.

"Most of our youth here have turned to illicit brews and engaging in unruly acts because they have nothing to do. The government should allocate funds for the rehabilitation of sports facilities to tap on youth talent in sports which is also a lucrative area if well exploited," asserted Mr John Kiama businessman from Nyeri town.

Mathioya Member of Parliament Hon Clement Wambugu who is a member of the budget committee said the new constitution had provisions for public participation in financial matters urging Kenyans to exploit the chance and decide how they want to be governed.

Wambugu said government funds should be channeled directly to wanjugu instead of being channeled through various ministries and the treasury.

Another committee member Hon Ababu Namwamba suggested that the government should invest heavily on areas with high potential in agricultural production to ensure the country has food security.

He added proper marketing of Kenya as a tourist hub should be done to attract more tourists in the country.

Namwamba also supported the introduction of the guaranteed minimum return to farmers and promised to table a motion in parliament to push for the same.

Budget committee chairman Hon Elias Mbau said the participation of the public in matters of budget making was a positive step in ensuring public funds are well managed and their needs prioritized.

Mbau said the views collected will be fully incorporated in the budget making process.

Group eyes debate on food crisis

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

AS the United Nations declares a famine in two regions of southern Somalia it is time for some real debate on how the global food crisis can be tackled. The Food Security Debate, to be held on the first day of this year's CropWorld Global 2011, will engage senior representatives from government, the private sector and NGOs. The aim will be to determine how to secure affordable food for a growing global population and provide sustainable and available food in areas where environmental conditions are challenging.

In Somalia, consecutive droughts over the last few years have depleted the country's crops and livestock, coupled with this has been an ongoing conflict that has hindered agencies operating and accessing communities in the south. It is now estimated that in the Horn of Africa region – which includes parts of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia – some 107 million people are in need of humanitar-

ian aid and in Somalia 25% of the 7.5million population are now displaced and at risk of malnutrition and infectious disease outbreaks.

"The crisis of hunger in the Horn of Africa is a harbinger of the future. But a far brighter future is possible. We must take action now to stabilise food prices, tackle climate change, and invest in the productivity of small farmers who still feed most of the two billion poorest people on our planet," says Phil Bloomer, Oxfam's Campaigns and Policy Director who will be speaking at the debate.

Also contributing to the debate will be Professor Ian Crute CBE, Chief Scientist for the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB). He believes that, "there is good reason to believe that it will be possible to feed 9 billion people without destroying the life-support systems of the planet; but this urgently requires a vigorous global investment in infrastructure, education, science and technology. We must deliver systems of crop production that will both to meet growing global

demand and maintain sustainable agro-ecosystems for generations to come.

Today's sporadic outbreaks of civil unrest and, at the extreme, the human misery of famine, reveal the future for many more if we should fail to do what is needed to deliver a sufficiency of affordable food".

This key debate, which will also include: Cyrille Filott, Global Head – Europe, Food and Agribusiness Research and Advisory, Rabobank; Dr. Hans Herren, President, Millennium Institute and Markus Arbenz, Executive Director, IFOAM, takes place on Day One of this year's CropWorld Global Congress to be held at the ExCel Centre, London from 31 October to 2 November. The event is organised by UBM, in association with BCPC.

With participants from over 50 countries CropWorld Global is a true global event attracting interest from both the technical and commercial side of the worldwide crop production and crop protection industry.

Muliro boasts of campuses

By TITUS MAERO

THE Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) has established eleven campuses since its inception in 2002, according to the Deputy Vice Chancellor in Charge of Research and Extension, Prof. John Shiundu

Shiundu said the campuses had been opened in Webuye, Sangalo, Bukura, Kaimosi, Ebusagwe, Nambale, Khasoko, Kapchoi, Nairobi and in Kakuma in Turkana County.

The DVC said the university had lived to its vision to be a centre of excellence in science and technology responsive to the needs of society through engagement in dynamic knowledge creation and application.

Speaking when he met officials from the African Canadian Continuing Education Society (ACCES) at the university in Kakamega, Shiundu said science and technology is the hall mark of the learning institution.

He said the institution had continued to review its programmers in line with the modern expectations and realization of the government's economic blue print vision 2030.

Taveta council acquires new refuse truck

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Taita Taveta County Council has finally acquired its first garbage collection truck as residents accused the authority of concentrating on the wrong projects.

The garbage collection department has been relying on an old, inefficient tractor to collect garbage.

But residents attending the unveiling ceremony for the new truck and a pick-up acquired at a cost of Kshs.8.5 million accused the council of wasting public resources on "frivolous projects" at the expense of more pressing needs.

The coordinator of the Taita-Taveta Rights Forum, Mr. Richard Mwangeka, claimed the council had many stalled projects that would have boosted the council's revenue base.

But the acting County Clerk, Mr. Simon Irina, said the vehicles would help improve service delivery to the public and were purchased with the approval from the Ministry of Local Government.

"The vehicles were bought with money that was included in the previous financial year's council budget which the ministry endorsed. There's



Taita County Council has acquired its first refuse collection truck to clear such gabbage. Photo/File

nothing fishy about the deal," said Mr. Irina. The vehicles have gener-

ated heated public debate, with some residents claiming the council should

have devoted resources to more critical areas.

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE giant Kisii Municipal council has missed out on its annual Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) allocation of Kshs30 million due its inability to clear the outstanding statutory debt.

Attempts by the council to obtain a bank loan to clear Kshs250 million it owes to the National Social Security Fund, (NSSF) National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) among other bodies hit a dead rock after it emerged that the loan would attract a monthly interest of Kshs8 million.

The mayor Samuel Nyangeso says that the council has forthwith suspended development projects slated for implementation during the 2010/2011 financial year.

The mayor blames corruption to the sorry state of affairs, saying that it is unfortunate that the council which

Kisii council unable to clear debts

generates Kshs30 million on a monthly basis cannot be able to clear its debts.

Nyamache town council, the smallest civic authority curbed out of Gusii county council has already received Kshs6 million LATF to undertake various development projects in Kiobegi-Gionseri, Nyantira, Emenwa Nyoera and Nyachogochogoa wards.

The council chairman, Robert Momanyi says the council has cleared her debts up to February 2011 adding that LATF funds will directly go into implementing projects in the wards.

Momanyi says that council's revenue base mainly from the matatu stage, market and cess from the tea factory has risen from Kshs0.9 million in 2007 to Kshs3 million in 2010, adding that the council targets to raise its

revenue to Kshs4 million this year.

He observes that when he took over, he sealed all corruption loopholes which in most cases affected revenue collection and service delivery.

Momanyi points out that the council intends to open up more markets to raise more revenue to bridge a deficit of Kshs 4 million in its budget, adding that already, the council has opened feeder roads, making it easier for traders to access various markets in the area.

At Gusii county council, Treasurer, John Omari told The Link that the council has received Kshs34 million LATF after securing a bank loan of Kshs 27 million which went into offsetting debts owed to statutory bodies.

Omari says that the council expects

to get a total of Kshs76 million during this financial year but adds that part of it will go into servicing the loan of Kshs 31million inclusive of the interest charged.

The treasurer said that the servicing of the loan will not affect the implementation of projects since it will be serviced for two years.

He appeals to the Ministry of Local Government to hasten the process of sharing out assets and liabilities among ten civic authorities curbed out of the Gusii county council to resolve the debt amounting to Kshs53 million.

Those town councils created out of Gusii county council include Nyamache, Nyamira, Nyansiongo, Keroka, Masimba, Ogembo, Gucha, Suneka, Nyamarambe, and Tabaka.

Authority defends its new weighing system

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) has dispelled claims by some transporters that the weigh-in motion weighbridges introduced three months ago were defective.

KeNHA reassured truckers that the weighing scales are calibrated after every month and are usually pretested to ensure they post correct weights.

The KeNHA Director General Meshack Kidenda at the same time accused truckers of causing artificial congestion at weighbridges, adding that no lorry will be allowed to pass before it is weighed by appointed managers at any weighing station.

He said the authority was aware of the challenges facing truckers and had stationed managers at the facilities to ensure that they were served promptly without delays.

"We want to assure truck owners that as the key stakeholders in protecting our roads, we will work together to ensure full compliance with axle load," He said as he toured the Athi River interchange along Athi River Mombasa road.

Engineer Kidenda appealed to transporters to cooperate with both Avery East Africa and SGS Limited who are manning the Athi River and Gilgil weighbridges respectively.

"We are satisfied with the performance of Avery and SGS in their

respective operations. We want all truck owners to cooperate with them and make out work easier," adds the Director General. He insisted that the scales being used are accurate and urged them to partner with KeNHA in ensuring adherence to axle load limits to protect our roads.

KeNHA outsourced the management of Mariakani, Gilgil, and Mlolongo Weighbridges in August last year to eradicate corruption and enhance efficiency of the weighbridges.

Mariakani and Gilgil are being managed by SGS Kenya, while Athi River is being managed by Avery East Africa.

The Authority has also invested in automation of the weighbridges

and has introduced a weigh-in motion scale in Mariakani.

So far cases of corruption have dropped drastically while movement at these facilities has also improved.

Meanwhile a school relocated in Mlolongo to allow for the expansion of the weighbridge is nearing completion. Mr. Kidenda toured the school being constructed by KeNHA and praised the progress made so far.

He said that the relocation of the school will give KeNHA new space to erect new scales on the dual carriage way.

The Director General said the construction of the JKIA-Machakos Turn off project that had stalled is now underway.

Murare stream poisonous

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE public health department has declared Murare stream in Murang'a unsafe for human consumption following the discharge of raw sewer into the stream.

District Public Health Officer Mr. Mbui Nyaga says that stream was unsafe for human consumption as samples taken for analysis revealed that the water from the stream had been contaminated.

The move comes in the wake of a public outcry that residents were being exposed to high risks of contracting water borne diseases after the main sewer line burst and the water company failed to correct the situation.

The public health official says the stream serves a large population and joins Mathioya River in the lower part of Murang'a East District.

Nyaga also directed the Municipal health officers to monitor the drainage system and ensure that all sewerage blocks are attended to without delay.

Teso residents advised on family planning

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

PEOPLE who do not plan their families cause untold suffering to their children, this was said by the Partnership for Peace Project co-manager, Jane Murutu, in Teso North District in Busia County recently.

Ms. Murutu emphasized the importance of having children one is capable of catering for without strain.

She said that it is absurd for one to produce so many children when he/she knows very well that the ability to cater for them is lacking.

She appealed to the Teso people to plan their families with a view to ensuring that they only bear children they have the capacity and ability to cater for.

"You have an obligation to educate your children, provide them with food and shelter, but you can successfully do these if the number of children you have commensurate with your resources and ability," she said.

Murutu decried the trend of unplanned families in the area saying that they are responsible for high truancy rates at schools and early marriages.

"Problems in families occasioned by over-stretched resources, force girls as young as 13 years to indulge in illicit sex and even to get married," she said.

The peace co-manager observed that for child labour, early marriage and prostitution to be reduced in communities, people must accept to use contraceptives.

President Kabaki promises deeper reforms

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT Mwai Kibaki has assured that the Government is committed to undertaking far-reaching reforms in the management of public affairs and entrenchment in constitutionality.

Speaking during a meeting with members of the African Peer Review Mechanism at his Harambee House Office, President Kibaki noted that new and vibrant structures of governance were being put in place under the new constitution.

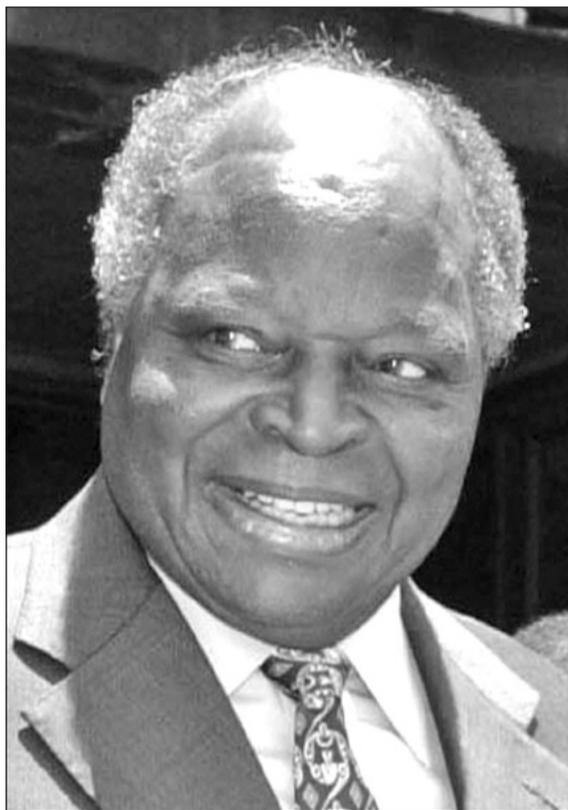
Noting that the Government had initiated various reforms aimed at consolidating the gains that have so far been realized, the President affirmed that the reform process was unstoppable on the path to building a prosperous and united nation.

The Head of State urged the APRM team to share their experiences, particularly positive developments realised in other parts of the world and which would be of value to Kenya and other African nations.

The President emphasised that the objective of the peer review mechanism is to help African nations improve and catch up with the developed world with regard to governance.

Speaking during the same occasion, Prime Minister Raila Odinga noted that Kenya was a pioneer in the review mechanism and was keen to evaluate the status of the country's governance and explore ways of improving weak areas.

The Prime Minister noted



President Kibaki

that Kenya was open to scrutiny by peers and looked forward to a full examination and recommendations for appropriate remedy for various challenges facing the nation and its people.

Former Liberian President Prof Amos Sawyer, who has taken over from former South African First Lady Graca Machel, is leading the African Peer Review Mechanism process.

During the occasion, Prof Sawyer noted that the APRM team was in the country for the second review at the invitation

of the Government of Kenya.

He thanked the Kenyan Government for its bold and unprecedented courage to undergo the process aimed at improving quality of governance in the African continent.

Prof Sawyer noted that Kenya had achieved several milestones especially the passing of the new Constitution adding that the ongoing transformation process will remain a significant legacy of the current government.

In attendance were Deputy



PM Raila

Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Uhuru Kenyatta, Minister for Planning and National Development Wycliffe Oparanya, Head of Public Service and Secretary to the Cabinet Amb Francis Muthaura and other senior Government officials.

The APRM comprises of African experts in various fields such socio-economic development, democratic governance, gender issues, human rights, conflict management, constitutional issues and media affairs.

Caveta council acquires new refuse truck

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Taita Taveta County Council has finally acquired its first garbage collection truck as residents accused the authority of concentrating on the wrong projects.

The garbage collection department has been relying on an old, inefficient tractor to collect garbage.

But residents attending the unveiling ceremony for the new truck and a pick-up acquired at a cost of Kshs.8.5 million accused the council of wasting public resources on "frivolous projects" at the expense of more pressing needs.

The coordinator of the Taita-Taveta Rights Forum, Mr. Richard Mwangeka, claimed the council had many stalled projects that would have boosted the council's revenue base.

But the acting County Clerk, Mr. Simon Irina, said the vehicles would help improve service delivery to the public and were purchased with the approval from the Ministry of Local Government.

"The vehicles were bought with money that was included in the previous financial year's council budget which the ministry endorsed. There's nothing fishy about the deal," said Mr. Irina. The vehicles have generated heated public debate, with some residents claiming the council should have devoted resources to more critical areas.

ACCESS offers scholarship to students

By TITUS MAERO

A Canadian Organization has offered scholarship to a tune of Ksh 20 million to poor but bright students to pursue higher education in the next four years in Kakamega County.

The organization known as African Canadian Continuing Education Society (ACCES) identified 103 needy students for scholarship to enable them study diploma and Degree programmes in various higher learning institutions in the country. The ACCES Programme Director M/s Lucy Tengeye said the students were selected from the 1,148 students who had applied to be considered for scholarship in order to continue with their education.

Speaking to the students who qualified for the scholarships during their orientation meeting held at the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), Tengeye asked them to concentrate on education and avoid engaging in social pitfalls.

She told the excited students that they have a responsibility to work hard and excel in their studies in order to be in a position to secure employment and plough back some of their earnings to the organization in order to assist other needy students. The official noted that the organization has an alumni organization which comprise of beneficiaries of scholarships who contribute funds to assist needy students most who are orphans and live in abject poverty.

Tengeye said the scholarship programme provides post secondary education opportunities for bright but poor students noting that the ACCES organization also has a mentorship activity to offer students through guiding and counseling departments.

Will there be an end to impunity?

From Page 8

ic, or are the judges and magistrates who promised 'hell' afraid the 'politics of the pocket' they have so well crafted has come to an end? Did they seriously believe Mutunga and Baraza are not qualified to take the position? Or do the learned judges think wearing an ear stud is an issue? Have they forgotten that ear decoration, as many Kenyans have reminded them, is an old tradition for most African people, both men and women? This fall back on cautioning others not to break African values only when it suits the one cautioning - in this case the judges - is similar to what came to be known as the 'Kenyan theory of love'. The theory evolved when in 1978, the Kenyan parliament introduced the marriage bill, which among other things

had a clause against wife-beating. The bill would have gone a long way to promote gender equality and improve the welfare of women and children in the case of death of a spouse or after divorce. Nevertheless, the bill was shelved largely because of the wife-beating clause. The men in the male dominated parliament argued they would have no means of demonstrating their love to their wives. According to one MP, the bill would make it impossible for men to teach their wives 'manners', while another added that African women loved their men when they were slapped, but also argued that the proposed legislation was 'very un-African'.

Thus, for the majority of Kenyan people, wearing a stud is a non-issue. It is justice they want. And if the opposition by the judges is an act of protect-

ing African values, what about the wig the judges wear under the tropical sun? Do the judges actually need this colonial relic to institute justice?

Shortly after taking office, the chief justice has promised to start a clean-up of the judiciary by the end of August, when the vetting of the 26 judges of the High Court is expected to be completed. He has also indicated that he expects their first duty to be to clear the files of pending cases on their shelves, including the high profile corruption cases which continue to consume huge sums of taxpayer's money. The chief justice has moreover promised to never compromise in ridding the judiciary of corrupt magistrates. The era of the 'untouchables' and the common saying of 'why hire a lawyer when you can buy a judge?' has, according to Mu-

tunga, come to an end because it is such practices which have damaged public faith in the judiciary. Rebuilding the public faith in the judiciary is the critical priority for Mutunga and will therefore require vigilance from the Kenyan people, because ending graft and corruption is a huge 'political project'.

Is this cleaning up of the judiciary what the judges and magistrates are opposed to? Will they really oppose a clean up to ensure the end of impunity and the cultivation of the rule of law and justice for the Kenya people? If indeed their aim is to continue with business as usual then their fear of public interviewing and a clean up of the judiciary is understandable. The Kenyan people therefore have a daunting job ahead in getting rid of the corrupt judges.

Schools to get tanks for watering trees

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MINISTRIES of Forest and Education have joined hands in an initiative that seeks to equip schools with water tanks to be used in the newly launched Plant for Planet Programme.

The Forestry Minister Noah Wekesa said recently that the water tanks will help in watering tree seedlings under the project.

"I want every school to establish nursery beds to plant trees so that we can start distributing the water tanks," said the minister.

He was speaking at Rhino Watch Lodge in Kieni West district during the launch of 'Plant for Planet Programme' whose slogan is Stop Talking Start Planting.

The minister said the Government is committed to increase the forest cover from 1.7 per cent to 10 per cent in the next two decades and so every student must plant three trees at home and five trees at the school.

He appealed to the colleges, schools and universities to ensure the students plant the trees.

"This will ensure there is enough water and people will no longer starve for lack of rain if we increase the forest cover," he added.

The programme which was introduced

by 13-year-old Felix Finkbeiner from Germany is aimed to plant millions of trees in 100 countries.

The project wants people to stop talking and instead plant trees for the planet.

Over 300 pupils from the 20 schools in the area were involved in the tree planting project.

Rhino Watch Lodge sponsored the event and also donated the land where over 500 trees were planted.

Finkbeiner said he was inspired by the work of the Nobel Prize Winner Wangari Maathai and so started the project in his school in Germany few years ago. The group will now move to South Africa.

At the same time, the minister has warned that forest guards who collude with loggers to engage in illegal logging will be sacked.

He said the Government will not encourage the vice and so they will immediately be dismissed.

The minister said the Government's lack of enough rangers is one of the challenges in the Ministry and therefore is looking for funds in order to hire more forest guards since currently one ranger is mandated to protect 800 hectares of land which instead should have been about three rangers.

He said once the funds are available, they will hire more rangers.



Maisha Wilh from Munich International School in Germany covers the mouth of Forestry Minister Noah Wekesa recently at Rhino Watch Lodge during the 'Plant for Planet Programme' whose slogan is Stop Talking Start Planting. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Mumias Sugar rescues derelict Kakamega Sports Club

By TITUS MAERO

KAKAMEGA Sports Club is set to receive a major facelift following an allocation of Kshs 20 million by the Mumias Sugar Company (MSC).

The Kakamega sports club Chairman Dickson Mutokaa says old structures will be demolished to pave way for the construction of ultra modern facilities. Mutokaa further says the club's expanded facilities will include a bar, hotel, sanitary facilities, conference hall, private rooms, and internet facility among others.

He told reporters at the club that the construction of the new building had been occasioned by the fast expanding town which has attracted visitors who would wish to watch golf competition and book accommodation at the facility.

The official also said the club had registered increased membership and therefore the current building which was constructed by colonialists who were prospecting for golf in Kakamega in 1930's is small and old fashioned without modern features.

Mutokaa also disclosed that Mumias Sugar Company (MSC) through its social corporate responsibility programme had assisted fund the construction of golfers of changing room at a cost of Kshs 500,000.

Is this the end of cronyism, impunity?

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

THE president will no longer appoint his cronies to hold public offices at will.

The constitution has put that on hold, and communities competing against each other to produce a president will be disappointed, when they fail to get the appointments.

The jostling to occupy state house is gaining momentum partly, because political elites have made their communities to assume that once in office, they will control the power and wealth associated with the title.

Mr. Omweri Angima of the Centre for Multi party Democracy told a workshop in Kakamega that the de-

parture from the current presidential system, creates strong vetting systems which limits powers by the executive to appoint his cronies to public offices.

Participants in the one day workshop on devolution were drawn from political parties in Kakamega, Bungoma and Vihiga counties.

He challenged the leaders present to understand the capacity of their counties in spending the money that will be released to them for development.

"Most of these counties have no capacity and mechanism to spend the proposed allocation of 15percent from the central government," he posed.

He expressed fears that majority

of the weak counties will be forced to return their allocation to the treasury, due to lack of capacity and proper planning.

Another pertinent issue, he says is linked to revenue generation by county governments that will determine how much money they get from the central government.

He says that leaders must now identify areas that can help generate revenue in their respective counties to enhance their capacity.

During the workshop, participants were enlightened on challenges they were likely to encounter once the county governments become operational.

Among the challenges listed include the fielding of candidates to fill all elective positions both at the county and National levels; the task of preparing party list to meet the minimum one third gender rule and special seats for the marginalized groups and; the formulae for determining the number of marginalized groups who should be members of the county.

Others include the ability of voters to fill at least six elective positions from a long list of aspirants whose maximum number is not fixed.

Participants were told that the counties must be run like businesses and those wishing to govern them have to assemble winning teams and excellent business strategies.

Kitui women lead in use of Fund

By BONIFACE MULU

WOMEN in Kitui Central constituency have been ranked among the best in the utilization of the Women Enterprise Fund in the country.

The fund's regional credit coordinator in Eastern Province, Mr. Joseph O.Oyowo, says that women in the area have already borrowed Kshs2.5 million out of the constituency's allocation of Kshs3 million despite the poor usage of the fund registered in other parts of the country.

He spoke as he presented 20 cheques worth one million shillings to 21 women groups

from Kisasi District within the Kitui Central constituency.

Oyowo said this year the government plans to allocate another Kshs1 million towards the kitty in every constituency to ensure that women are empowered to participate in development.

"This money is meant to enhance your capacity to engage in income generating projects and unless you in-

vest in viable projects, you will not be able to repay funds advanced to you," he explained.

He said that the interest rates charged on the loan were negligible and therefore women must not shy away from applying for the loans.

The official however said that only groups registered with the Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services will benefit from the allocation.

He said that beneficiaries will then be allowed three months to gain a solid base in their respective projects before

they can start repaying their loans.

The Kisasi District Women Association chairlady, Mrs. Martha Kiema, highly thanked the women for their cooperation.

The District Social Development Officer, Mr. Robert Kinge, who had accompanied Oyowo, also

addressed the function. The area chief, Mr. Maluki Mumo, who had represented

the District Commissioner Joshua K.Chepcheng, also addressed the gathering.

Contractor threatens to abandon Mwingi projects

By KAVYU-KURA

THE construction work at two Economic Stimulus Projects (ESP) in Kyuso and Tseikuru districts have stalled midway after the contractor pulled out of site citing failure by the government to pay up and arbitrary variation of the Bill of Quantity (BQ).

The contractor- Davim Construction and Electrical contractors- has already suspended work at the Kshs. 30 million Kyuso District headquarters complex and sent workers home following a row with the government over a revised building plan.

The same contractor who had also been awarded another Kshs10 million ESP contract through the local government ministry to con-

struct fresh produce market stalls at Tseikuru trading centre had also suspended work at the site.

When The Link visited the two projects in early July, there was no activity at both sites although a lonely watchman was found at the deserted Kyuso office complex. The construction of the building had been abandoned mid way. At the Tseikuru the fresh produce market had stalled at the slab stage.

When contacted for comment, the managing director of Davim Construction and Electrical contractors David Kasamuku said trouble started after the government ambushed his firm with a revised and costly bill of quantity when substantial work had already been accomplished.

The Contractor said that he suspended the work after the Ministry

of Works varied the contract indicating that the cost of the work would shoot up by about Kshs.7.5 million but the payment was not accordingly revised leaving him with the risk of running into huge losses should he adhere to the new BQ.

"I am waiting for communication that would accordingly increase the contract value as per the revised bill of quantity so that I can order my people back to site," said Kasamuku who pulled workers from the site some times in last May.

Kasamuku further disclosed that he had temporarily abandoned work at the Tseikuru market project until he was paid the Kshs. 3.7 million that was due for the accomplished work. He said he was not amused by the government failure to pay him even after



VP Kalonzo Kalonzo lays the foundation stone to commission the construction of now stalled Kyuso office complex.
Photo/Kavyu-Kura

he was given a certificate for the already completed work.

The contractor spoke soon after the area MP and Vice-Presidents Kalonzo Musyoka who had initially officiated the laying of the foundation stone at the Kyuso project, accused him of acting in breach of contract by abandoning the works at District complex site and the Tseikuru fresh produce markets.

Kalonzo had days earlier toured the abandoned Kyuso office complex project and lamented at what he termed as mindless waste of government resources after the contractor left the landmark project.

The VP told a meeting at Kyuso market that he was disturbed that the contractor chose to abandon the projects and forced the Ministry of Public Works to issue him with a contract default.

But on his part, Kasamuku fought back saying that the move against him was not justified as he had done most of the walling and was about to erect the ring beam when he was asked to pull down the structure after the bill of quantity was abruptly varied to accommodate the "open plan system."

Kasamuku said that he was ready to move back to site as soon as he received an official communication indicating that he would appropriately be compensated for pulling down the already erected

structure in order to conform to the newly imposed specifications.

"If the government makes an official statement to the effect that it will fully meet the cost of the Bill of Quantity variation to conform with the newly introduced open plan system then I will move back and finish up the work by January next year", said the .

Even as the Kyuso office complex is steeped in problem, the Thangaine General Contractors have won a tender to contract a similar office complex at the Tseikuru district headquarters. Recently, the Tseikuru DC Stephen Momanyi showed journalists an architectural drawing of the proposed office complex.

Even as it emerged that the two ESP projects in Mwingi are dogged in problems the same cannot be said of the model Heath centre projects at Ngomeni trading Centre in Mwingi north and Ukasi Trading Centre in Mwingi South Constituency.

Inquiries by The Link indicated that the two health projects that were each allocated Kshs 16,000 progressed well and were likely to be completed in good time. A member of the ESP project monitoring team from Mwingi North Paul Kimilu said in early July that work at the two model health centres were over 90 percent complete.



The stalled Kyuso District headquarters' office complex. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

The Independent Electoral a

INTRODUCTION

THE new law provides for the establishment of an Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC) with a clear mandate to supervise elections and referenda at both County and National Government levels.

Unlike in the past where the disbanded Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) became a captive to incessant political feuds, the new Commission has been sheltered from any form of political manipulation and Section 26 affirms that the Commission is not subject to direction or control by any person or authority and draws its foundation from the principle of public participation through consultation with stakeholders.

The new law imposes stiffer penalties to both the commissioners and employees who contravene the Act in pursuit of personal fulfillment. Section 30 (1) states that a member or employee of the Commission who knowingly obstructs the Commission in the discharge of its functions or interferes

with the functions of the Commission commits an offense and is liable on conviction to a term not exceeding three years or to a fine of not more than Kshs1 million or to both. A person who is convicted of an offense under the Act is not eligible to hold public office for a period of ten years.

The Commission has its work clearly cut out ahead of the 2012 General Elections with the first task being to review constituency boundaries to create the 80 new zones proposed by the defunct Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC).

Functions of the commission

The Commission's roles as outlined in section 4 of the Act include:

- Continuous registration of citizens as voters
- Regular revision of the voters roll
- Delimitation of constituencies and wards in accordance with the Constitution
- Regulation of the process by which parties nominate candidates for elections



Kenya's quest to resolve longstanding issues that escalated into violence following the disputed results of the presidential elections of 2007 has begun in earnest. The enactment of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Act sets in motion a crucial process in the management of the electoral reforms outlined in Article 88 of the Constitution. The legislation marks the beginning of perhaps the most fundamental step towards streamlining the flawed electoral process ahead of the 2012 General Elections, argues our Sub-Editor, FAITH MUIRURI.

“Regulation of the amount of money that may be spent by or on behalf of a candidate or party in respect of any election.”

- Settlement of electoral disputes, including disputes relating to or arising from nominations, but excluding election petitions and disputes subsequent to the declaration of election results.
- Registration of candidates for election
- Voter education
- Facilitation of observation, monitoring and evaluation of elections
- Regulation of the amount of money that may be spent by or on behalf of a candidate or party in respect of any election
- Development and enforcement of a code of conduct for candidates and parties contesting elections
- Monitoring compliance with the legislation required by Article 82 (1) (b) of the Constitution relating to nomination of candidates by parties
- Investigation and prosecution of electoral offenses by candidates, political parties or their agents pursuant to Article 157 (12) of the constitution
- Use of appropriate technology and approaches in the performance of its functions

Composition of the Commission

The commission is to comprise of the chairperson and eight other members appointed in accordance with Article 250 (4) of the Constitution which stipulates that appointments to Commissions and independent offices shall take into account national values and reflect regional and ethnic diversity of the people of Kenya.

Further, Section 6(1) of the Act states that only individuals who qualify to hold the office judge of the Supreme Court under the Constitution can be appointed to chair the commission.

Members of the Commission on the other hand must be

- Kenyan citizens
- Holds a degree from a recognized university
- Have proven relevant experience in any of the following fields:
 - Electoral matters
 - Management

“Use the IBRC reference point in it was adopted Assem

- Finance
- Governance
- Public Administration
- Law

Independence of members

Every member and employee of the Commission has an obligation to remain impartial and independent while discharging their duties in good faith and without fear, favour or prejudice and without influence from

- Any arm of the government
- Any state officer
- Any public officer
- Any political party
- Candidate participating in an election
- Any person, authority or organization

Section 2 in the fourth schedule clearly stipulates that members of the commission are not eligible for

- Appointment or nomination to



Mr. Andrew Ligale (left), the chairman of defunct IBRC, which has been merged with IIEC to form the new IEBC. Photo/File

and Boundaries Commission

a political office

- (b) Appointment to another public office

Further members of the Commission are barred from

- (a) Directly or indirectly supporting or opposing any party or candidate participating in an election or any side participating in a referendum or any other issues being contested between parties, candidates or sides
- (b) Make private use of or profit from any confidential information gained by virtue of being a member of the Commission
- (c) Divulge any information to any third, save in the course of official duty

Guiding Principles

Section 25 places an obligation to the Commission to ensure that:

- (i) Citizens freely exercise their political rights under Article 38 of the Constitution
- (ii) Not more than two thirds of members of elective public bodies represent the same gender
- (iii) Fair representation of persons with disabilities and other persons or groups with special needs
- (iv) Free and fair elections which are
- By secret ballot
 - Free from violence, intimidation, improper influence or corruption
 - Conducted independently
 - Transparent
 - Administered in an impartial, neutral, efficient, accurate and

report as a primary in the exact way by the National bly."

accountable manner

- (v) Undertake elections on a regular basis in accordance with the Constitution
- (vi) Ethical conduct
- (vii) Fairness

Section 27 (1) lays emphasis on the need by the Commission to publish all important information within its mandate affecting the nation.

However in Section 27(3), the right to access information under Article 35 of the Constitution is limited and the Commission may decline to give information to an applicant where

- (a) The request is unreasonable in the circumstances
- (b) The information requested is under consideration
- (c) Failure to pay prescribed fee
- (d) The applicant fails to satisfy any confidentiality requirements by the

Commission

Review of Constituency Boundaries

Section 1 under the fifth schedule mandates the commission to resolve all issues arising from the report compiled by the defunct Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IBRC) in regard to the delimitation of both constituency and wards boundaries and publish its final report in four months from the date of its appointment under this Act.

In order to resolve the issues that have sharply been contested in the IBRC report, Section 2 gives the Commission powers to

- (a) Use the IBRC report as a primary reference point in the exact way it was adopted by the National Assembly
- (b) Use as a secondary reference material, the report compiled by the Parliamentary Committee

The Commission is to further address:

- (a) Redistribution of wards or administrative units in the affected constituencies
- (b) Issues of new constituencies falling outside the population quota as provided for by Article 89 (6) of the Constitution but at the same time ensure that such a process
- (i) Takes into account the provisions of Article 89(7) (b) of the Constitution that requires progressive efforts and not instant demographic equality of all towards attaining the population quota in each constituency and ward for purposes of the first review
- (ii) Is not subject to new definitions of cities, urban areas and sparsely populated areas or to new population figures
- (iii) Be subject to the use of enumerated national census figure and not projected figures
- (c) Addressing the issue of progressively advancing towards the population quota in protected constituencies in relation to neighbouring constituencies where appropriate.

Delimitation of electoral units

Under section 3(1) of the fifth schedule, the Commission is to prepare and publish a preliminary report outlining

- (a) The proposed delimitation of boundaries for constituencies and wards
- (b) The specific geographical and demographical details relating to such delimitation

The Act provides that the



The chairman of IIEC Mr. Ahmed Issack Hassan. The body is set to be replaced by the IEBC.
Photo/File

Commission must ensure the preliminary report is availed to the public for a period of twenty one days during which the public is to present their views on the proposals contained in the report.

Upon expiry of the period, the Commission compiles and submits a revised preliminary report to the Parliamentary Committee within fourteen days. The Com-

mission must ensure the preliminary report is availed to the public for a period of twenty one days during which the public is to present their views on the proposals contained in the report.

However, in the event that parliament is unable to make a resolution within the stipulated period, the Act provides that the Commission proceeds to publish the report within fourteen days.

Any person, who fails to publish the report submitted by the Commission within the stipulated

Review of Decision of Commission

The law further allows aggrieved parties to challenge before the High Court decisions by the Commission under the Constitution and this Act.

An application for the review is to be made within thirty days after publication in the Gazette and must be heard and determined within thirty days of the date on which it is filed.

Sensitization on the proposed boundaries

The Act stipulates that upon publication of the proposed boundaries, the Commission must facilitate the sensitization of the public for a period of thirty days.

Further, the Commission is to ensure that all documents, materials, publications, reports and recommendations arising from the delimitation process are maintained in a form that is accessible and usable by members of the public.

“Be subject to the use of enumerated national census figure and not projected figures.”

mittee must table the revised preliminary report in parliament within fourteen days upon receipt.

Parliament is expected to debate on the revised report and forward its recommendations to the Commission within seven days.

Upon the receipt of resolutions by Parliament, the Commission prepares and submits within fourteen days its final report based on

period, commits an offense and is liable to imprisonment for a term of one year.

Section 9 under fifth schedule further allows the Commission to publish the report within fourteen days in at least two dailies of national circulation if the report is not published in the Gazette and this option is to be considered as legitimate.