

NTA claims billions were returned to treasury

By **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

ABOUT Kshs.67.8 billion from various ministries was allegedly returned to the treasury at the end of the last financial year.

Mr. Martin Nabisa of the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) made

the claims recently

Mr. Nabisa says that NTA is dismayed by the inability by some ministries to utilize funds at the expense of taxpayers.

He discloses that already NTA has raised the issue with the parliamentary budget committee adding that the com-

mittee has agreed to take up the matter with the ministries concerned.

The NTA official claims that the Ministry of Education returned to the treasury a total of Kshs. 23.5 billion.

A huge chunk of this money Mr. Nabisa says that was supposed to have been

spent on infrastructure development.

“This amount would have helped finance the construction of 47,000 stand-alone classrooms at Kshs. 500,000 per classroom, which translates to at least

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PM unveils 24-hour e-service centres

The move aims at improving public service delivery to the people

By **FAITH MUIRURI**

THE government has unveiled plans to enhance access to public services to the people through information, communication and technology-based information centres.

According to the Prime Minister Raila Odinga, the centres form part of key initiatives geared towards bolstering the Transforming Kenya Programme that include the

implementation of Constitution and realization of Vision 2030's medium-term flagship projects.

“This will include establishing one-stop shops with a single-window online portal for government services, call centres, and mobile phone platforms. This will truly transform government services, making them accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” he explains.

The Premier points out that the estab-

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PM Raila Odinga unveiled plans to enhance access to public services.

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PM Raila unveils 24-hour e-service centres

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Establishment of citizen service centres is part of the Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) meant to expedite delivery of services by integrating commonly used public services through ICT.

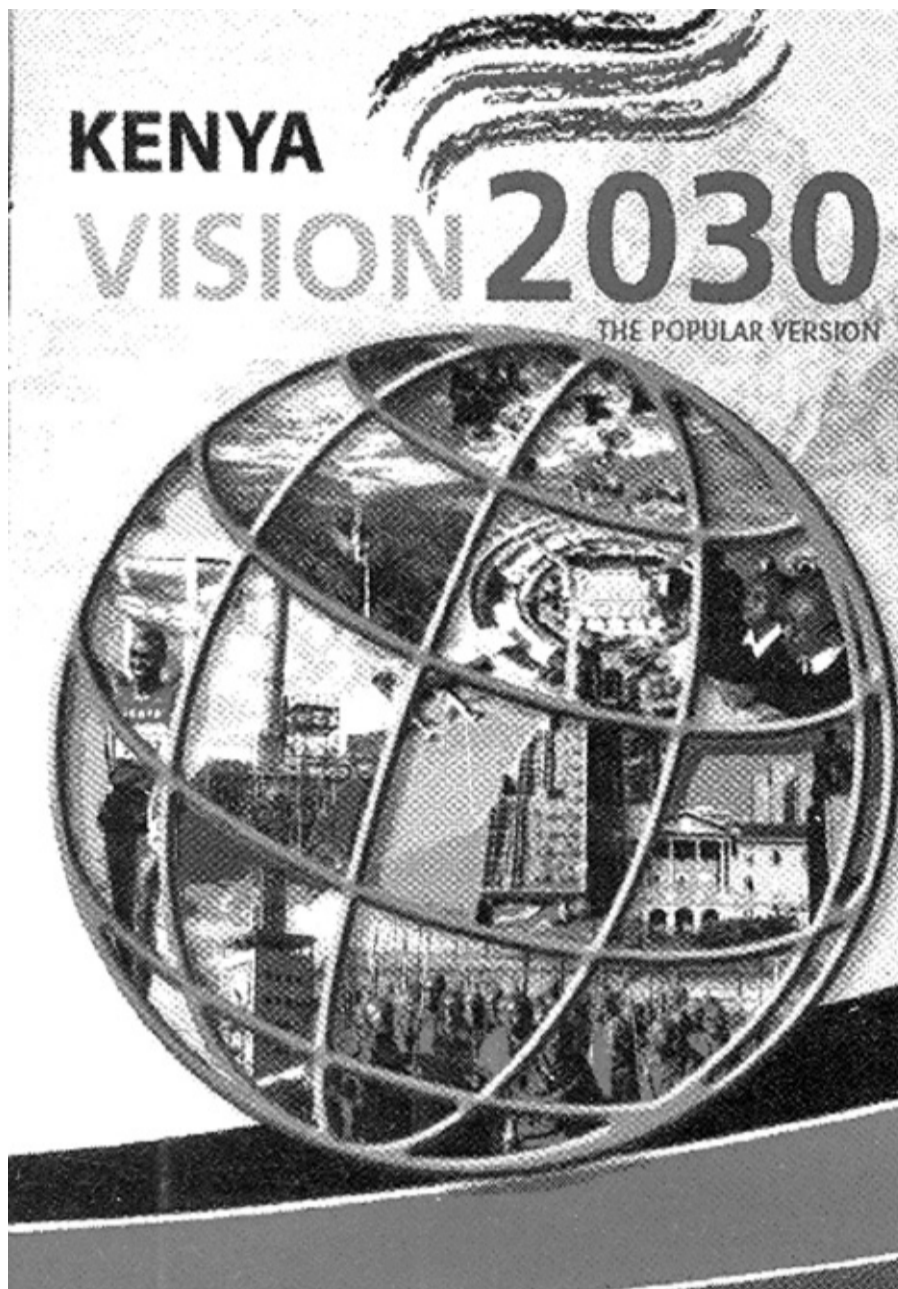
RRI was first introduced in Kenya on a pilot basis in 2004 through partnership between the Government of Kenya and the World Bank. The pilot program was run within the National Aids Control Council and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and was a success. Following the success of the RRI wave in the first two institutions, in 2006 the government decided to undertake institution-wide RRIs in five additional ministries and following significant success in this further deployment, the Government instructed all ministries, departments and agencies to deploy RRI as a tool for mainstreaming results based management in the Public Service.

Raila says the centres will enable citizens to participate in decision-making processes through mechanisms that will facilitate idea-sharing and feedback to government and the various stakeholders," he explains.

And although the PM admits the programme is ambitious, he is quick to point out that the initiative aims at mainstreaming into the public service the principles of the new Constitution which guarantees a revitalised impetus for change and an opportunity to set the nation on the right track.

In fact, he says that all government institutions have been instructed to review their policies, legislation, regulations and administrative structures to harmonise with the demands of the Constitution.

"The programme's goals are ambitious. "But we must be ambitious too. We must aim always



for higher things. This golden moment will not come again soon, and we must seize it, and move confidently in the direction of our dreams," he adds during the launch of Transforming Kenya Initiative at the KICC.

He challenges ministries to develop and implement change-management plans to ensure a

smooth transition. "Our clarion call to the public service is to "get it right from the beginning".

To fast-track the process, the Director of E-government Dr Katherine Getao, says that the government has drafted a policy to provide the required legal framework for the integration of the service centres to the existing

government network.

She says that relevant studies have also been carried out to assess the viability of the programme.

Dr Getao says that once the centres become operational, Kenyans will only need to dial a single number and access the whole government including the immigration department under the new plan dubbed Huduma Sasa. "This means that you do not need to travel to Nairobi to get a passport. These centres will provide a multiplicity of government services at the touch of a button," she adds

She says that the centres will be put up in designated public service areas and facilities such as post offices that are spread out in different parts of the country.

"The usage of ICT in the centres will enhance efficiency in the sharing of accurate information and data by respective government departments," she explains.

She further says that the initiative will operationalise digital villages to hasten the implementation process by ensuring that government services are decentralized and services are available in one stop shop.

The PM however laments that past efforts to transform the public-sector performance have not bore much fruit since improve-

ment has been insufficiently widespread and unsustainable.

"We must now discard this piecemeal approach to reforms and embark on the comprehensive transformation of our country, in line with our new Constitution and Vision 2030. It must be a universally collaborative effort, to include government, the public and private sectors, civil society and the youth," he urges.

He calls for concerted efforts to remove the barriers to change, to mobilise resources and to create and share new systems and sound management practices.

"The first is a dedicated government effort towards implementation of the Constitution," says Mr Odinga.

The Premier points out that the devolution process will transform the entire structure of our country, and thus the need to match deliberate action and consistent focus on national priorities.

He notes that the Transforming Kenya Programme is expected to impact on citizens' lives in five crucial areas.

- The economy. It will create an environment conducive to private-sector growth.

- Opportunities. It will create employment opportunities for young Kenyans through Vision 2030 projects such as Special Economic Zones.

- Services. It will enhance quality of life by transforming education, health and other public services.

- Infrastructure. Priority investment in this sector will open up the movement of goods and of people.

- Competitiveness. These reforms will help make our country competitive, creating economic progress through an increase in foreign direct investment, product diversity, and adaptation to new technology.

NTA claims billions were returned to treasury

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two classrooms per school for all the 21,000 public primary schools in the country, thus effectively eliminating congestion," he says.

The ministry of Provincial Administration and Internal Security is also alleged to have returned colossal amounts of money to the treasury.

According to Mr. Nabisa, the Provincial Administration returned a total of Kshs. 11.3 billion to the treasury despite the fact that most AP camps are in deplorable condition and the department is faced with inadequate facilities such as basic communication devices and transport.

The department of defense is another area that is under scrutiny by the taxpayers watch dog.

Under this vote head Mr. Nabisa alleges that a total of Kshs. 10.7 billion was returned to the treasury.

These funds, the NTA official says would have helped in the construction of 50,000 Kms of heavy graded rural roads to alleviate the problem of poor rural network across the country.

"We need to modernize our military and transform it into a developmental force for national infrastructural development such as bridge and road construction, disaster management among other things," he says.

The ministry of higher education is reported to have re-

turned to the treasury Kshs.8.2 billion despite the high number of students graduating from high schools and failing to proceed to the next level due to lack of funds.

Mr. Nabisa says that this money would have been used to resolve these challenges by expanding capacity in institutions of higher learning in order to accommodate more students.

Mr. Nabisa says that the Roads Ministry returned to the treasury Kshs.7.8 billion which he adds that would have been used in the construction of 39,000 Kms of heavy graded rural roads across the country at an estimated cost of Kshs.200,000 per km.

This, Mr. Nabisa argues



Prof. Saitoti: Minister for Provincial Administration and Internal Security



Ms. Ngilu: Minister for Water and Irrigation

would have helped transform rural access roads that are a major impediment to farmers and

Kenyans in general.

Water and Irrigation ministry is said to have returned to the treasury Kshs.6.3 billion.

State told to come clear on hiring of teachers

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

KNUT Nyeri branch Executive Secretary Mr Mutahi Kahiga has urged the Government to come clear on the issue of hiring teachers.

Kahiga said the conflicting signals by the Government on the hiring of teachers on permanent terms did not auger well for the sector which was currently grappling with massive shortages.

"One day, the Minister for Education Sam Ongeru announces that he has sought finances to be able to hire the tutors. The Minister of Finance Uhuru Kenyatta presents a budget that doesn't mention the teachers at all," he poses.

"This creates discomfort with KNUT sounding war drums. It is claimed that the budget presented is not final but subject to scrutiny by parliament. It is said that there will be reallocation of funds from ministries with a view to allocate an extra Kshs 9 billion to hire the tutors and hire another 10,000 teachers," he said recently in Nyeri town.

He adds that Uhuru was quoted as having said that he would not allow reallocation of funds.

"The chairman of the parliament committee on Education continues to hold the view that parliament has earmarked the Kshs 9 billion for hiring the tutors. Education PS Hon Ole Kiyapi assures all and sundry that the Government is ready to hire the tutors on permanent terms. Ongeru stands on the floor of parliament and releases a statement denying the Government's ability to hire the tutors," Kahiga said.

He said this is lack of seriousness on the part of the Government is what drives teachers to the streets in protest.

"As Government play their ping pong game, it is important that they know that they are playing with lives of real living people. Nothing is more humiliating than being in the same staffroom with colleagues, trained at the same level but earning half what the others earn. Incidentally, these teachers are expected to do double the job the others do because they are referred to as 'new brooms that sweep better,'" he adds.

The Executive Secretary therefore said the government must be forthright being prepared to do something about this matter.

In the meantime, he said KNUT should not only sound the war drums but start gathering weapons for a tough, long drawn battle adding that the teachers can't continue that way.

Public varsities set to clear admission backlog

By TITUS MAERO

THE Joint Admission Board (JAB) Chairman Professor Barasa Wangila has told public universities to brace for tough times ahead, as the process to clearing the backlog on student admissions begins in February next year.

Wangila says universities will be required to admit extra students to clear the backlog that has for years forced students to wait for up to two years to join the public universities.

The V-C says the decision to admit extra students is aimed at clearing admission backlog to enable students join higher education immediately after clearing their secondary education.

Addressing MMUST staff and the students at the institution, the

administrator notes that the current system provides that students who qualify for university entry must wait for two years.

"This means that students who qualify for degree course after the release of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Exam results in February each year have to wait for two years before admission to public university," he explains.

On the other hand, Wangila says that students who can afford self sponsored courses some times enroll in October of the same year giving them an advantage over their peers.

"By the time the regular students join university those enrolled under the parallel degree are already gearing up for their third year of study, an issue seen as disadvantageous to regular stu-

dents," he adds.

The Don pointed out that the current backlog could undermine the quality of education and contribute to inequality saying the backlog stems back to 1982 when universities used to close due to student strikes.

Wangila says that Kenyan university are already grappling with a quantity crisis arising from overstretched physical facilities and a shortage of lecturers

"The situation is likely to worsen with the double intake syndrome," he says.

He says currently the country has seven public universities which include Nairobi, Kenyatta, Egerton, Moi, Jomo Kenyatta, Maseno and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) which have a student population of over 100,849.

The V-C suggested that to address congestion in public universities, there is need to upgrade university colleges to fully fledged universities. He named the university colleges as Bondo, Chuka, Kimathi, Mombasa Polytechnic, Kenya Polytechnic, Pwani, Multi Media, Kabianga, Narok, Meru, South Eastern and Kisii.

He says the total number of students joining public universities could increase from the current 100,000 to about 150,000 by the year 2015 adding that currently the government releases a uniform figure of Kshs 120,000 per student to all public universities.

Wangila says JAB stresses the need for universities to uphold high quality while ensuring sustainability, affordability and relevance in education.



A section of university graduands

Kakamega Knut officials embroiled in a fight

By JOEL JUMA

ROW has erupted among teachers in Kakamega County after a group demanded benefits from a local building they contributed to put up.

The building, which was put up in Kakamega town by teachers drawn from the former larger district, generates over Kshs 80, 000 monthly in rent.

Officials of the Kakamega Central District are said to be sharing the proceeds alone.

Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) branches in Kakamega North, Kakamega South, Kakamega East, Mumias and Butere districts are demanding benefits from the building.

They argued that the building was constructed when they were

part of the Kakamega office.

The matter has since been forwarded to Knut national office.

The union's Kakamega County branch chairman Patrick Chungani said the dispute should be resolved immediately.

Chungani said teachers from other districts had contributed towards the construction of the building and should be allowed to reap from their investment.

Chungani said the formation of the Kakamega County branch has brought together teachers from the former larger district.

He said a bank account should be opened where the money accumulated from the asset can be used to carry out programmes aimed benefiting teachers from across the county.

"Kakamega Central is getting

its share from the national office in the same way as other branches. Any other benefit should be spread to cover all players in the county," said Chungani.

He explained that teachers from the County should undertake education programmes using rent collections from the building.

He said Kakamega Central branch officials should not share the rent alone.

The building houses institutions such as the Kakamega Teachers Benevolent Fund (KTBF), a series of bookshops and other businesses.

KTBF chairman Patrick Ongaya and secretary Francis Ometty revealed that they do not pay rent.

"We are housed at Knut Building because we carry out functions on behalf of teachers," said Ongaya. He explained that it is other

tenants who pay rent to the union.

The Kakamega Central branch chairman Tom Ingolo termed the matter as complicated. "We are still settling some debts left when our brothers went to form their own branches. There is nothing much to share," said Ingolo.

Ingolo explained that the matter can be resolved by a meeting of all branches in the County.

"We have not settled to see how the money collected from the building can be translated into an investment," said Ingolo. He explained that they were still new in the office and are scrutinising records that former officials used.

"Some of the tenants paid rent in advance to the former officials. We have not received anything from them since we took over office," said Ingolo.

Tana River: Officials vow to improve education standards

OFFICIALS in Tana River District have launched an ambitious plan that seeks to revamp education standards in the area.

The District Education Office, Mr. Kassim Shehe, says his office has mooted strategies that will reverse the trend and uplift the profile of the District in the national ranking.

“Our past performance in the national exams has not been impressive but we have identified the causes of the low grades with a view to taking measures to reverse the trend,” he adds.

He says in the 2008 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination, the district presented 801 candidates who earned a mean score of 225.47, while in 2009 1,072 candidates earned a score of 219.53. This dropped further to a mean score of 216.8 during last year’s KCPE where 885 candidates sat for the exam.

He says Kiswahili subject

COMMENT

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

which ranked highly in the area only managed an average mean score of 50.0 in 2008, while the English subject registered the poorest mean score of 39.39 in the 2010 national examination.

In 2010 KCPE, only three boys and five girls attained marks to guarantee them entry into national schools, while a total of 325 pupils including 238 boys, 85 girls and two girls from special schools qualified to join provincial institutions.

Another 225 pupils were admitted to district schools with the number of pupils who joined Form One being 559 out of the 885 who sat the 2010 KCPE exam. The district has five schools Wenje, Maumau Memorial Girls, Daku, Hola and Ndurani with Daku and Ndu-

rani, the latter being the latest.

Performance in KCSE has recently been on a downward trend. In 2008, the mean score was 3.5. In 2009, the District only managed 3.41 mean score while this dropped to 3.19 in 2010.

He says enrolment has been impressive with the number of children being enrolled in both Primary Schools and Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres going up steadily from 18,929 in 2009 to the current 21,620 students.

He however said that some areas had continued to register appalling enrolment figures and cited Chifiri and Duwayu as having failed to register a single girl for the KCPE in the past six years, while others have as little as four girls in Standard Seven.

The DEO blames the trend on early marriages and teenage pregnancies, with the district recording an average of 60 cases annually. Galole North

Zone have registered 73 pregnancies in the past three years alone while Galole South zone records 20 cases per year.

Poverty index is high and many parents are unable to pay fees because of low interest in the education of their children, resulting in poor performance in national examinations.

He says religion and cultural beliefs among members of the communities encourage early marriages that have become a major setback in the education sector as young girls are forced out of school to get married off.

The nomadic lifestyle of pastoralists who migrate together with children in search of water and pasture has also caused pupils to drop-out, resulting in low enrolment.

Drugs and substance abuse has also led to poor performances and the set of Khat (miraa) by parents has been cited as a tragic example for children.

The area also suffers shortage of teachers and the few who are available are reluctant to work in the region, resulting in a poorly imbalanced pupil-teacher ration.

The district has a shortage of 38 teachers. He said cases of children leaving school is especially high during the mango harvesting season and measures have been put in place to reverse the trend, including involving NGOs, Government departments and the provincial administration in addressing the problem.

Intensified assessments to establish what teachers were doing in class and emphasizing completion of syllabus in good time have also been instituted.

Mr. Paul Ngama, the Galole South Zone Education Officer says at least 200 students have benefited from bicycles donated by the Green Africa Foundation, an NGO working in Galole South Tana River District.

Nazarene University sets up base in Mwingi town

By KAVYU-KURA

THE African Nazarene University (ANU) has signed an agreement with a privately sponsored Early Childhood Development (ECD) college in Mwingi town to offer various degree courses.

The ANU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Leah T. Marangu and the Director of the Mwingi Early Childhood Development (ECD) College Ms. Beatrice Mukanda recently sealed the deal to pave way for the implementation process.

The deal was part of an array of activities during the Mwingi ECD College fifth graduation ceremony held at the Mwingi sports grounds. The ceremony presided over by Prof. Marangu saw 155 teachers who graduated awarded with diplomas and 38 others with certificates in ECD.

Prof. Leah underscored the invaluable role played by the Mwingi ECD College in the education development and the advancement of the country. She added that Kenya’s vision 2030 hinged on the country’s ability to produce well trained, disciplined, highly motivated and purposeful graduates.

She stressed the need for the country’s elite and the learned to build positive character lamenting that unethical practices that impact negatively on the country’s economy like corruption are the result of lack of good character and integrity.

Councillor Joseph M. Munyambu who represented the Mwingi Town council chairman Felix Nzung’u noted that the involvement of the ANU



Prof. Leah Marangu of ANU is joined by Mwingi ECD college director, Beatrice Mukanda, as they cut the tape to signify the union between the two institutions. Photo/Kavyu Kura

with a Mwingi institution was a major educational milestone in the history of Mwingi.

“Education being the key to success..... we should take the challenge of registering as many students with the new branch of the African Nazarene University,” said Cllr. Munyambu as he called on the people of Mwin-

gi to seek to advance their careers.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony whose theme was “Education for Transformation,” Ms. Mukanda stressed the need for the people of Mwingi to embrace education as a strong weapon to change the world.

“It is important in that it helps an individual to realize his or her poten-

tial. Education also enables one to change the world to a better place to live and work in as well as raising a family in a more responsible way,” said the Mwingi ECD college boss.

Ms. Mukanda explained that the need to collaborate with the ANU was borne out of the need by alumni to further their education.

Kuppet calls for more consultations over schools

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya Union of Post Primary Education of Teachers (Kuppet) wants the Government to shelve the elevation of over 80 secondary schools to national status to pave way for further consultations.

Kuppet says the government should also not release over Kshs 25 million meant to upgrade each of the selected schools until the stakeholders give in their input.

Union Secretary General Akello Misori says many schools have been discriminated during the selection exercise which must be reviewed.

Misori and the union officials from Kakamega and Vihiga Counties underscores the need for Education minister Sam Ongeru to hold regional consultations over selection of national schools to avoid controversies.

He explains that some of the deserving schools have been left out and yet they merit for elevation. Misori says union branches across the country have expressed shock on some of the schools earmarked for elevation.

“I have received many complaints and the matter need to be evaluated a fresh before the money can be released for their upgrading,” said Misori.

He says the selection criteria was flawed and likely to compromise the quality of education as some of the schools were not meeting the re-

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Kuppet calls for more consultations over schools

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quired standards.

"The Education Act stipulates that a school should have at least three acres of land for it to operate but there are many without such space and yet they are being elevated to national status," said Misori.

Misori and Executive Secretaries Harrison Otota (Kakamega) and Nixon Amendi of Vihiga explain that the composition of District Education Boards (DEBs) should be revised to have the union members be included.

Amendi says that some of the decisions were being made in DEBs

where some stakeholders are not represented. He demands that Kuppet be represented in all DEBs as it is recognized by the Ministry of Labour and the Teachers Service Commission.

Bishop Titus Khamala of Cornerstone ministries and the Council of Imam and Preachers of Kenya Vice Chairman Abdala Ateka says their religious organizations were not consulted on the elevation of schools.

Ateka and Khamala terms it as shocking that none of the Muslim schools in Western province was among those earmarked for eleva-

tion into national status.

Kakamega high school was picked from Kakamega County alongside Butere Girls. The move is causing ripples among the stakeholders as neither of them is sponsored by the Catholic Church nor Islamic organization.

St Peters Mumias High School Principal Godfrey Owuor says that although the school has been expanded to the required standards, it is not among those slated for elevation this year.

Mr. Owuor explains that sponsors who include Mumias Sugar Company and Kenya Commercial

Bank have assisted the school with over 100 computers this year to improve on computer studies.

The Catholic Church has already raised an objection to the process saying that the church was opposed to the current number of schools selected by the ministry of education.

Bishop Maurice Crowley of Kitale Diocese was reported to have said that the church wants more consultations to be held over the matter.

Misori however challenged the Government hire more teachers for deployment into the selected schools as they are set to admit more students.

Bahari CDF to pay varsity fees for needy students

By BEKADZO TONDO

BAHARI Constituency Development Fund committee has earmarked funds to support students from poor families willing to proceed to the university.

Bahari MP Benedict Gunda says that some of the bright students from the area have been unable to proceed to the university due to lack of funds.

"A good number of youth who attain good grades in their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) have remained at home because their parents cannot afford the exorbitant fee charged by the universities," adds Gunda.

The MP reveals that the first beneficiaries will receive their bursary allocations from next year and appealed to needy students to forward their names to the CDF office for consideration.

The legislator made the remarks during a funds drive in aid of university students from Bahari, Kaloleni and Ganze constituencies enrolled at Pwani University.

He says that with the county government in place, residents must be highly qualified to enable them take up the many job opportunities to be created. "It is however regrettable that most of the jobs to be created at the county are likely to be taken away by outsiders if we are unable to raise the required number of qualified personnel," he explains.

Mr. Ken Chonga who had accompanied the MP to the funds drive lamented that a number of the youth in the area had dropped out of school due to lack of school fees and challenged local leaders to come to their aid.

Mr. Chonga said the area will continue to lag behind in development unless the youth are supported to acquire skills required in the labour market.

He vowed to work with the area MP in supporting youth take up leadership positions in the area.

At the same time leaders in Chonyi division of Kilifi district want mixed schools phased out in a bid to uplift the standards of education in the area.

The leaders blamed the dismal performance posted by most schools in the area schools to having both boys and girls students learning in the same institutions.

Led by a former Permanent Secretary in the ministry of Gender and Social Services Mrs. Rachael Dzombo, the leaders said there was need for the leading secondary schools in the area which include Lutsangani, Dzitsoni, St Paul Harris and St Teresa's mixed secondary schools be made either boys or girls.

State on course to meet MDG on education

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Ministry of Education has reaffirmed its commitment to provide quality education to all children and youth irrespective of their social status.

The remarks were echoed by the deputy director of education Fidelis Nakhulo when he presided over the Busia teachers college graduation ceremony.

Nakhulo said that the government had accelerated reforms in the education sector over the last five years in line with the National Economic Recovery Strategy for Employment and Wealth Creation as well as meeting its international commitment to ensure Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by the year 2015.

The deputy director of education pointed out that Vision 2030 had outlined flagship projects to be undertaken in the education sector in order to attain quality education that was competitive globally.

Nakhulo however said teacher shortages in most learning institutions in the country was counterproductive and expressed optimism that the ongoing recruitment through the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) will reverse the situation.

"The ministry's vision is



Deputy Director of Education, Fidelis Nakhulo who was the chief guest at a graduation ceremony at the Busia Teachers Training College recently. Photo/Nyakwar Odawo

guided by the understanding that quality education and training contributes significantly to economic growth and expansion of employment opportunities," said the deputy director of education.

He at the same time appealed to the graduands and continuing students not to indulge in immorality, drugs and alcohol abuse as the vice has seen the lives of very promising professionals going to waste because

of lack of control and discipline.

Nakhulo said teachers should focus on the individual learning needs of the child regardless of the vulnerabilities and circumstances.

By TITUS MAERO

Muliro open for private investment

DUE to limitation of resources, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) is unable to accommodate more than 10,000 students, according to the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barasa Wangila

Hence, the university is proposing to partner with private developers under the Build, Operate and Transport (BOT) concept to build more hostels in the campus.

The VC said private developers with land adjacent to the university are encouraged to construct purpose designed hostels for students to rent.

Addressing investors drawn from Kakamega County, Wangila noted that under the BOT concept

of hostels development, the university will provide land as per the master plan where the prospective investor shall build a hostel to the set specification.

Under the arrangement, he said that investors will construct the hostels, manage and charge students who occupy them before transferring the facilities to the university at the end of the agreed period.

"The university and the investor shall enter into a long term agreement specifying the obligations of either party for the duration of the contract," the administrator explained adding that the institution shall specify the

minimum standards to be adhered to for each hostel to be built.

He observed that the contractors will be guided by the hostel size and hostel design to be approved by the university but shall adhere to some minimum requirements.

Wangila, however said alternatively, the university shall facilitate the investment by providing land on which the hostels shall be constructed, access roads, power, water and sewer connections to the buildings.

The don also informed the over 200 investors that the university plans to offer both architectural and engineering consultancy services to the

developers for an agreed period of time to be able to beat a given deadline.

The administrator said the university had proposed a lease period of 25 years inclusive of the construction period noting that at the end of this period the developer is to hand over the hostel to the university after inspection of the same.

Wangila pointed out that other areas of partnership with private investors would include construction of staff houses to be bought or leased to the university staff noting that this would be constructed off campus on land bought and developed by finan-

ciers/developers.

He said that as the university staff members continue to grow there is need to have estates designed and constructed with specific clientele in mind adding that a concept of this nature has never been developed within the Kakamega County.

For starters, MMUST was started in the year 2002 when the first lot of students was admitted to the Western University College of Science and Technology (WUCST) under the faculties of Science and Engineering plus Education and Social Sciences.

President Kibaki backs school feeding program

By PETER MUTUKU

PRESIDENT Mwai Kibaki has reaffirmed government's commitment to supporting the school feeding programme in order to ensure that the education of children in famine-ravaged parts of the country is not compromised.

The President directed relevant ministries to ensure that the Kshs2 billion allocated by the Government to the school feeding programme is utilized prudently to ensure students in areas hard-hit by drought are catered for expeditiously.

The resolve to support the school feeding programme follows a realization that education and learning depend on good nutrition and health.

A research report titled "The Partnership for Child Development" by Dr Joy Miller Del Rosso revealed that nutritional and health status are powerful influences on a child's learning and on how well a child performs in school.

According to the research, children who lack certain nutrients in their diet (particularly iron and iodine), or who suffer from protein energy malnutrition, hunger, parasitic infections or other disease, do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished chil-



President Kibaki backs school feeding programme in order to ensure that the education of children in famine-ravaged parts of the country is not compromised.

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Weak health and poor nutrition among school age children diminish their cognitive development either

through physiological changes or by reducing their ability to participate in learning experiences or both.

The extra demands on school-

age children (to perform chores, for example, or walk long distances to school) create a need for energy that is much greater than that of younger children. Moreover, deficiencies of critical nutrients such as iodine, vitamin A and iron among the school-aged are pervasive.

Children with diminished cognitive abilities and sensory impairments naturally perform less well and are more likely to repeat classes and to drop out of school than children who are not impaired; they also enroll in school at a later age, if at all and finish fewer of schooling.

Further research by assistant minister Higher Education DR Kilemi Mwiria and programme experience has also shown that improving nutrition and health, through school feeding programmes, can lead to better performance and bring immense benefits to education.

The irregular school attendance of malnourished and unhealthy children is one of the key factors in poor performance- even temporary hunger, common in children who are not fed before going to school, can have an adverse effect on learning. Children who are hungry have more difficulty concentrating and performing complex tasks, even if otherwise well nourished.

It is in view of this that the Government of Kenya has, for decades initiated and sustained several school feeding programmes in order to improve and maintain the education standards in famine stricken parts of the country and other under privileged sectors of the society.

Granny rendered homeless by estranged husband

By KAVY-KURA

SYUKAU Lisi, 77, and her 16-member family in Migwani district of Mwingi region have been rendered homeless after auctioneers ruthlessly demolished their home.

The auctioneers descended on the family at their home in Kathukumani village unannounced and served them with an eviction order issued by a Machakos court before pulling down all the structures in the compound living the family with nowhere to sleep.

The move followed a successful application by her estranged husband Lisi Mbinga, seeking to evict her from the homestead.

Syukau's husband has for some time been living at the home of his first wife in Kangundo District. And due to unclear differences, the husband is said to have made various attempts to disinherit Syukau of the plot of land where she lives with her children.

When The Link visited the homestead, property including beddings, boxes, beds and personal effects were strewn all over courtesy of the work of the heartless auctioneer.

The Link gathered that the auctioneer was executing a court order to evict Syukau Lisi's family on the plot of land as it had changed ownership. The Machakos court had ruled in favour of Rose Ongili- who is Syukau's step daughter.

Syukau who had declined to move out with her family even after all the houses were pull down, said she doubted the authenticity of the court order as she had filed a case before the Mwingi court challenging the intention by her husband to disinherit her.

"I have lived here for years since I was married in 1956 and this land belongs to me and my children. I went to court over a year ago when word went round that Lisi Mbinga (her husband with whom they had separated) wanted to disinherit me and transfer the ownership of this land to my step daughter, Rose.

She said that she sued her husband to pre-empt the move to transfer the ownership of the land to a different person because she had the right to own the land which she and her children have lived on for over 55 years. She said she did not have any other place to go to if evicted.

Her brother-in-law David Musesee Mbinga whom we found in the compound said that his brother, Lisi, had no justification to disinherit Syukau the land.

Migwani DC Were Simiyu said he had heard about the bid to evict the elderly woman from her land following a court order but said although he had initially been informed that the court order was genuine, I would investigate to find out whether anything fishy was going on.

Central IDPs complain of discrimination

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

INTERGRATED IDPs living in central province say they have become victims of discrimination and stigmatization.

The over 8,000 internal refugees lament that they are being discriminated by relatives, council of elders and the provincial administration.

During a prayer meeting held at Ruring'u stadium in Nyeri County, they alleged that the landlords are tired of them since they do not have money to pay rent and were conspiring with the provincial administration to eject them from their houses.

Most of those who come from Kiini West district specifically Mweiga and Endarasha areas claimed that local chiefs had refused to regard them as members of the community.

The area chairman Geoffrey Kabui who came from Burnt Forest claimed that the chiefs even deny them relief food and had offered to support landlords in ejecting them from their houses due to lack of rent.

"The chiefs have even refused to give us relief food. They say we are fake IDPs. Everybody is tired of us," said Margaret Ngunjiri who arrived in Kiini from Eldoret four years ago.

Others claimed that their children have dropped out of school for lack of fees as they are not considered for bursaries.

John Njuguna who is the coordinator of the IDPs in Kiambu said that many have died while waiting for help as only few of them received Kshs10,000 which was peanuts.

Others have committed suicide



IDPs from Central Kenya protest over discrimination at Ruring'u stadium in Nyeri County recently.
Photo/ Joseph Mukubwa

due to lack of hope and due to stress and depression.

They said they have enough energy and only needed land so that they can settle and farm to get food.

Charles Wamae who also came from Eldoret said that the disabled IDPs and those suffering from HIV/ Aids have also been forgotten.

"My child is still traumatized up to date four years after the post election violence. Every time we hear loud

sound from anything, he thinks they have come again. We stay in a house with leaking roofs," said Elisheba Wangari who came from Molo.

They also lamented that the IDPs in the camps are being favoured by the Government and given more priority.

Those integrated, they said have been forgotten and forsaken.

The IDPs now want the Government to resettle them immediately failure to which they will not cast their

vote come the next general elections.

They said the number of the IDPs is more than 20,000 in the region since others have been born after they were displaced.

At the same time, the IDPs said they are not aware of any budget allocations by the Finance Minister to settle them since they have not been received even a cent.

Wekesa denies funding claims

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

BUNGOMA County Council Chair Mr. Meshack Simiyu Wekesa has refuted claims that he used council funds to mount his campaign for the seat.

Mr. Wekesa reiterates that neither the council nor any of the local MPs funded his campaign for the seat as alleged by his opponents.

He points out that none of the 35 councilors in his camp had access to the council funds.

Mr. Wekesa castigated his predecessor Cllr. Julius Bakasa for alleging that the councilors were maintained in a three star hotel in the coast region courtesy of council funds and MPs opposed to Eugene Wamalwa's bid for the presidency.

Cllr. Bakasa and the local populace had accused some local MPs of working in cahoots with people from outside Bungoma County to defeat the camp allied to Wamalwa.

But in a rejoinder the council chair points out that the change in leadership was necessitated by a dire need to restore the council's lost glory adding that his team is determined to turn round the council.

He noted with dismay that during Bakasa's tenure, the council had dropped from position 5 to 95 in performance adding that was the reason why councilors decided to change the leadership.

DC speaks out on plight of Bungoma IDPs

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

SOME internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Bungoma South District may miss out on the Government's resettlement package.

Bungoma South District Commissioner (DC) Mr. Wilfred Nyangwanga reveals that the 99 IDPs will not be part of the 441 IDPs in the area slated to benefit from the Kshs 4.2 Billion set aside by Finance minister for re-settlement of IDPs countrywide because they lack documentation.

Mr. Nyangwanga explains that 55 of the affected group did not have identification cards (IDs) while the names of 44 others are missing from the list that came from Nairobi.

Mr. Nyangwanga says that the 55 are the same group that missed out on the initial assistance of Kshs. 10,000 and Kshs. 25,000 each respectively due lack of IDs.

The DC however says that he sought clarification from the Minister of Special Programmes on the group that was missing from the list but he is yet to receive communication from the ministry.

Those who received the Kshs. 35,000, the DC says were able to buy small plots at Mayanja where they are currently staying.

He adds that those who are yet to be paid have been integrated thus, living with friends and relatives.

Meanwhile 80 bar and restaurants owners in Bungoma South District have applied for licenses to the District



IDPs in a camp.

Alcoholic Drinks Regulation control Board.

Bungoma South District Commissioner (DC) Mr. Wilfred Nyangwanga, who chairs the board, claims that most applicants appear to be ignorant about the new liquor law popularly known as Mututho law.

The DC asserts that pubs within 300 metres from education institutions will not be licensed adding that the board is currently visiting all those who applied to assess their premises.

Mr. Nyangwanga dis-

closes that already some bar owner have started to panic because they have been operating in undesignated areas thus within 300 meters from schools.

"Some have even started coming to us requesting that we bend the law. But we cannot do that. The best these people can do is to re-locate their businesses," the DC says.

The DC made the remarks in an exclusive interview with *The Link* in his office recently.

Bungoma council owed millions

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

BUNGOMA Municipal Council is owed over Kshs200 million in rates and single Business permits.

This was disclosed the council's Finance, staff and General purposes committee chair Cllr. Joseph Magudah.

The finance chair names the Government as one of the major rate defaulters, with an accumulated debt of Kshs2, 035, 261 in Contribution in Lieu of Rates (CILOR)

Cllr. Magudah says this amount accounts for annual payments by the Government to the plots housing Government offices.

The outstanding debts, the finance chair says are hampering the council's operations and service delivery to the town residents.

"This is a lot of money which the council can use to effectively discharge its mandate without necessarily waiting for LAFT disbursement," Cllr. Magudah says.

As a result, Cllr. Magudah urges rates payers to clear their debts to enable the council offer services without financial constraints.

He appeals to all rate defaulters to come up with payment proposals to avoid the risk of going through the court process.

Cllr. Magudah, however, adds that already some defaulting businesses have been bonded and the owners are being taken to court for prosecution.

The finance chair points out that the council is in the process of updating the business register to capture all the businesses within the municipality for easy collection of revenue.

Cllr. Magudah, at the same time discloses that the council has new by-laws which the residents must be conversant with to avoid being penalised.

Endarasha members complain of mismanagement

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE 591 old men and women who founded Endarasha scheme are up in arms over the alleged mismanagement of their cooperative society by an interim committee.

They claim that the interim committee which was supposed to run the scheme for only six months, unlawfully extended their mandate to remain in office for over 13 years now.

According to the group's spokesman, Mr Christopher Kamau Githinji, the nine member interim committee took over leadership of the scheme in 1998 when the 591 original members of the Endarasha Plots and Housing Investments reacquired the scheme from Endarasha Co-operative Society.

"But they were only supposed to serve on a six months interim

basis. However, they have continued to serve the scheme without a clear mandate and contrary to our expectations," he adds.

Speaking at a crisis meeting held in Endarasha town recently, the spokesman said that no elections have been held as the committee has blatantly refused to convene an AGM to allow for the election of new officials.

"This has in essence meant that members remain in darkness with regard to the running and management of their plots with no accounts records having been read to them," he said.

They claim that two of their five plots-one with rental houses and another rented to a contractor for six years now have been generating over Kshs 27, 000 on a monthly basis but the money cannot be accounted for and might have been misappropriated.

The group further alleges that they have not received any dividends inspite of the revenue generated from their investments.

They are also accusing the committee members of diverting proceeds from their investments to their personal accounts.

Former chairman, Mr John Mungai said that a valuation of their assets was carried out by Cooperative Bank in 1988 upon payment of a valuation fee of Ksh.28,000 and the members were issued with share certificates of Kshs.72,000.

He added that some of the original members of the scheme have died without benefiting from the plots given to them by the government back in 1963 to facilitate drying up of pyrethrum and sale of milk among other projects they desired to undertake.

Area MP, Hon Nemesys

Warugongo said that there is an urgent need to have the current committee disbanded and fresh elections conducted to elect new office bearers.

He added that the interim committee has been operating illegally as it was meant to run for only six months.

He however, said that the committee will be forced to table valid reports of how they have been running the investments and incase of funds misappropriation, legal measures will be preferred against them.

Warugongo added that he will be pursuing the matter further with the Minister for Cooperative Development.

Also present at the meeting were the area councilor, Mr Peter Mwaura, regional co-operative officer and officers from the administration.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

Guard new law on appoints against forces of impunity

THE newly enacted Independent Offices (Appointment) Act may be the law Kenyans have been yearning for many years to help professionalize management of public offices.

The Act promises to reduce jostling for political power that has threatened to push Kenya into an abyss of civil war and political turmoil as greedy politicians and their selfish backers compete to control the mantles of state power that comes with authority to fire and hire public servants.

This unbridled, raw power has been dispersed to other arms of government such as parliament, which must vet and approve all public office appointees before they can take up office. The president, prime minister and ministers must from now on worry about what parliament will think or say of their appointees.

This is a welcome departure from the Moi and Kibaki eras where nepotism and cronyism were the order of the day in public appointments. The vices permeated all manner of appointments. No type of office was spared. The constitutional offices, ministerial offices, diplomatic service and parastatal offices were all littered with relatives, coat jesters, friends and supporters of the appointing authority.

And it did not end there. The appointees also perfected the art of heavily populating the office with kith and kin. Those were the days of the infamous incantation "it is our turn to eat". This is the warped philosophy that to date guides appointment to organizations like Kenya Revenue Authority, Ministry of Finance and Security superstructure, among others.

It is the instinctual philosophy that has blocked progress and development of this country for close to fifty years. And with the forces of impunity still lurking in many dark corners and corridors of power in this country, it is very doubtful of this noble law will ever be implemented fully.

Look at what they have done to the political parties' law and the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) just to mention a few. The long and short of this is that the new Act is good but Kenyans must keep a keen eye on its implementation lest it be derailed by the forces of impunity of yester years. (*Also see Center Spread*)



COMMENTARY

Scientists call for early warning systems

PRODUCTION of cassava, one of the world's most important food crops, is precarious and could be toppled by a perfect storm of pests and diseases, according to a new study by scientists at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT).

Threats to cassava production: known and potential geographic distribution of four key biotic constraints, just published in the journal Food Security, identifies hotspots around the cassava-producing world where conditions are right for outbreaks of some of the crop's most formidable enemies: whitefly, green mite, cassava mosaic disease and cassava brown streak disease.

Cassava is the third-most important food crop in the tropics after rice and maize, and is consumed daily by up to one billion people, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. Prized for its ability to thrive in harsh conditions, cassava produces its carbohydrate-rich roots in poor soils, even in times of drought. Industrial cassava production is also a crucial source of income for hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers.

By using a technique known as ecological niche modeling, CIAT scientists were able to conduct a detailed global risk assessment for cassava, in relation to the four pests and diseases. They compared cassava producing areas where they are already present, with areas that have similar environmental conditions, but where specific pest and disease pressure is either absent or low.

They found that the conditions are right for combined outbreaks of all four pests and diseases in some of the world's major cassava producing zones. These include Africa's Rift Valley region, much of Southeast Asia, southern India, Mato Grosso state in Brazil, and northern South America.

"The research shows that there are perfect niches for some highly damaging pests and diseases in

COMMENT

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

areas currently considered safe havens," explained CIAT entomologist and leading cassava expert Dr. Tony Bellotti, one of the article's authors, and who has worked with the crop for nearly four decades. "An outbreak of one of these could be very severe, but all four at once would wreak havoc."

"Historically, cassava pests and diseases have demonstrated a remarkable ability to colonize new areas in new countries, if conditions are favorable," he continued. "We've seen how quickly the cassava mealybug, another major cassava pest, became established for the first time in Thailand in 2008/9, crippling production. While the Thai authorities reacted quickly and decisively by deploying a parasitic wasp to attack and control the mealybugs, the outbreak still wiped out almost a third of last year's harvest and cassava fields across Southeast Asia continue to be at risk."

"We're already getting reports of sightings of pests in new areas, which seem to support our findings."

A major cause of the rapid spread of cassava pests and diseases is the method by which the crop is propagated, with new plants grown from stakes - stem cuttings taken from older plants. As well as helping transfer infections from one generation of cassava crops to the next, the stakes are often transported very large distances - sometimes across international borders - enabling the spread of pests and diseases far beyond their geographic centers of origin.

"In an age of global travel, local risks to cassava production are now global risks - all it takes is one contaminated stake and a pest

or disease could jump an entire continent and establish itself very quickly," continued Dr. Bellotti. "In many places farmers are totally unprepared for this," he continued. "If we're going to protect one of the world's most important crops, it's going to be critical to refine and enforce establish protocols for the movement of stakes."

The authors also recommend the more formal international early warning systems for cassava, to ensure a swift response to any outbreaks.

"There's no doubt that with good preparation, the more effective the response will be. Without a coordinated international effort to monitor the risks and raise the alarm, it's almost inevitable that these potential niches will eventually see real and serious outbreaks."

The study, funded by HarvestChoice, an initiative of the University of Minnesota and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), also highlights the need for renewed emphasis on research into plant hosts, viruses and disease vectors, as well as their natural enemies, and for these to be combined with integrated pest and disease control strategies at regional, landscape and local levels.

"The models confirmed what we always thought could happen," said CIAT's Beatriz Herrera, the report's lead author. But now we have much more clarity about the specific areas at risk, and therefore, the most effective responses.

"Quantifying risk is complicated and ecological niche modeling has its limitations, but these results should allow us to prepare for the worst-case scenarios by developing strategies to help smallholder farmers in the danger zones."

CIAT's cassava research program is already working to develop cassava varieties resistant to whitefly, green mite and cassava mosaic disease.



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P.O. Box 7438-00200, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 020 6001776 / 020 6001274
Email: thelink@wananchi.com

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Enhancing governance for all

EDITOR
DANIEL OTUNGE

SUB-EDITOR
FAITH MUIRURI

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
OLOO JANAK

WRITERS

MORRIS GITHENYA Central
0735 855586

JOSEPH MUKUBWA Central
0724 039787

BEKADZO TONDO Coast
0728 341240

PETER MUTUKU Eastern
0721 455048

KAVYU-KURA Eastern
0721 000000

BOB OMBATI Nyanza
0728 435255

OJWANG OGOCH Nyanza
0725 690223

NYAKWAR ODAWO Western
0726 264153

LUKE KAPCHANGA Western
0723 622136

AGGREY BUCHUNJU Western
0733 537002

JOEL JUMA Western
0723 622136

LAYOUT AND DESIGN:

WALTON DESIGNS

0725 903 938

kasserahw@yahoo.com



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All correspondence and enquiries to the editor, P.O. Box 7438, 00200, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 020 6001274
Telefax: 020 6001776
e-mail: thelink@wananchi.com

Nyeri forum calls for servant leadership

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

A DIALOGUE forum held in Nyeri town recently resolved that only leaders of integrity will be elected in next General Elections.

The meeting dubbed 'Citizen Dialogue Forum' also resolved that good governance should be given priority once the County Governments become operational.

The co-convener of Nyeri Social Forum Mr David Ngigi said that people of Nyeri County want economic empowerment and servant leaders who will always be available to the people at the grassroots level.

"We want fresh blood and fresh thinking. Leaders of integrity must be given the first priority. We are ready to vet those who will vie for the seats in the county," Ngigi added.

The forum was hosted by Nyeri Social forum and attended by over 500 people from the six constituencies of Nyeri County which are Othaya, Nyeri Town, Tetu, Kieni, Mathira and Mukurwe-ini.

The participants included youth leaders, opinion leaders, grassroots community based organizations and aspirants of various seats.

Aspiring leaders present included Mr Mutahi Njururi (aspiring Nyeri Governor), Mr Waitiki Ndegwa (aspiring Nyeri mayor), Mr Mwangi Kiande (aspiring Nyeri Town MP), Mr Samuel Wamathai (aspiring Nyeri Town MP) and Mr Viscount Murgu (aspiring speaker).

Njururi said the youth must be economically empowered.

Nyeri Mayor Mr Edward Muteru who was present promised to im-



Aspiring Nyeri Governor Mr. Mwangi Njururi (left) chats with aspiring Nyeri Town MP Mr. Mwangi Kiande during the Citizens Dialogue Forum held at Old Municipal Hall in Nyeri town recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

prove the town and ensure that traders are allowed to work freely without harassment by the Nyeri

Municipal Council.

Nyeri Social Forum said they will organize how they will vet the

aspiring leaders as others are not fit to hold any public office.

By JOEL JUMA

THE Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) has told political parties to adopt reforms outlined in the Constitution to avert disputes during nomination of candidates in next year's General Elections.

IIEC said parties should further educate their supporters on the new election requirements and the new seats created.

"Cases where winners are declared the losers should be history. The issuance of nomination certificates should be to the right person," said IIEC Commissioner Abiud Wasike.

Cases of issuance of nomination certificates to losers were rampant in Orange Democratic Party and Party of National Unity in the last

General Elections.

The disputes made some parties to experience fallouts, with some aggrieved members abandoning their parties after they were rigged out at the nomination level.

Wasike who was speaking during a voter education exercise in Kakamega County explained that the there was need for Kenyans to understand the guidelines of voting.

The meeting which was held at Kakamega Social Hall and also addressed by the Western Upper Regional Commissioner Peter Okwan'yo and the Commission's

Voter Education and Partnership Manager Nancy Kariuki heard that the electoral body recognises the holder of the party nomination certificate, irrespective of how they got them.

"As a commission you clear the one with the nomination certificate regardless of whether they won or not," said a participant.

Wasike said the commission is preparing mechanism to ensure the next General Election is free and fair. He explained that the commission is set to oversee the polls in August next year as outlined

in the new Constitution if Parliament does not give other dates.

"We shall adhere to the dates stipulated in the Constitution to avoid legal battles," said Wasike. He explained that the commission wants to avoid cases where the body is sued for not conducting the elections as per the laws approved by Kenyans.

He challenged women to wake up and seek political seats. He explained that women should not wait to be nominated just because the law says they must occupy a third of political seats.

IIEC wants party elections democratized

Kimilili workers protest over salary arrears

By JOEL JUMA

WORKERS at Kimilili Municipal Council have downed their tools to protest against the non-payment of their salaries over the last three months.

The workers failed to report to their various work stations but instead gathered in small groups at the municipal grounds.

They then held peaceful demonstrations in Kimilili town, vowing never to resume work until their grievances are addressed.

A worker, who sought anonymity for fear of being victimised, said they chose to down their tools because chief officers appeared unconcerned about their welfare.

"We have been going to their offices everyday but nothing

has been forthcoming. We have families to feed and children in school," he said.

But as the over 70 workers were protesting, the mayor, Florence Wekesa and chief officers were said to be in Nairobi.

"They are in Nairobi processing visas to travel to Sweden on an exchange programme," said another worker.

He claimed the council has withdrawn a bank overdraft of Kshs15 million to clear the arrears. Other arrears have been cleared but not our salaries," he added.

He further claimed that workers who are close to chief officers have been getting their salaries.

"Here, it is all about who knows who. If you are not connected, too bad for you," he added.

Eshiwani roots for regional education

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government has been urged to adopt an education system that can allow Kenyans to pursue studies within East African Community member States.

Kakamega County educationists want the Government to develop an acceptable system that cuts across the EAC economic bloc without any hurdles.

Led by George Eshiwani, they explained that the proposed changes in the 8-4-4 system should ensure that the certification process complies with those of other countries.

"The EAC integration requires that the proposed education sector reforms attach relevance and be acceptable in the East African Countries," he stated.

He said what the country needs is a developed system that will enable our learners to get easy admission in other countries institutions of learning.

"We need a system that will ensure that Kenya students are not forced to start a fresh when being admitted in Uganda, Tanzania or other member countries" said Prof Eshiwani.

He added that the new system should also attract more foreign students into the country instead of seeing them off to Uganda in search of Form Five and Six.

Mumias MP Ben Washiali Eshiwani warned that the proposed 6-6-3 system should not replace the current system.

They noted that the Government needs to employ more teachers to boost education standards instead of replacing the 8-4-4 system with the proposed 6-6-3.

Mr. Washiali was speaking at Khaunga Secondary School during a tour of the school while Eshiwani made the remarks at Mumias St Peters Mumias high school.

They noted that deployment of teachers in secondary and primary schools remains a major challenge to the Government as most learning institutions are understaffed.

"The ministry of education should address the teacher shortages in schools," said Washiali.

Eshiwani explained that students who fail to qualify for university risk suffering as the system has not provided how the learners will be absorbed in the middle level colleges.

Nyeri traders protest over increased council rates

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

ABOUT 400 traders from Nyeri town recently stormed the Town Hall to protest over increased council rates.

Waving twigs and placards, the angry protesters accused the council of hiking by over 50 per cent rent, licenses and parking fees among others without involving them.

The demonstrators who had earlier marched along the major streets in the town said that the notice given to them was too short and they were never consulted over the matter.

They claimed that the 50 per cent increase in rent and entry fees was unrealistic and no extra services have been introduced to justify the increase.

tify the increase.

They demanded to be addressed by the Town Clerk Mr S. M. Murlanga who had issued a notice that the rates will be increased.

The new rates also affect those buying land in the area as land rates have gone up.

The entire business community has been affected as all levies have gone up including the refuse collection charges.

"How can you increase the charges of our licenses when the inflation rate is so high and unbearable. They never even bothered to consult us and we only came to see the notice. Businesses have drastically dropped due to global economic crisis and this is not the right time to increase the entry and rent fees. How dare them?" posed

Mr Amos Muchiri.

Mr Joseph Maina said that the traders have been maintaining all the services required but no improvements have been made especially in the open air market where they work on earthly and dusty ground since time immemorial.

Central ward councilor Mr Paul Kanyari who joined them said that they must get an urgent reply.

The traders led by Mr Peter Kagiri threatened to march to State House to seek address of President Kibaki. They urged Prime Minister Hon Raila Odinga and his DPM Hon Musalia Mudavadi to intervene.

The mayor told them to select over 10 representatives in order to hold consultations with the Town Clerk.



Nyeri traders protests outside Town Hall recently after they protested over new council rates by the Nyeri Municipal Council. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Kimilili family cries fowl over land row

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

KENYA Anti-corruption Commission (KACC) has been called upon to intervene in a case involving a family and Kimilili Municipal Council to save them from losing their land to imposters.

The family of the Andrea Kirimojo of Kimilili district, say they have valid ownership documents on the parcel of land measuring 6.56ha dating back to 1940.

In a letter to the Anti-corruption agency, the family claims that Bungoma District Survey, staff and councilors of Kimilili Municipality have always thwarted efforts made by the Kirimojo family to repossess their ancestral heritage.

The family members led by Mr. F.E Makila urged KACC to intervene in the matter adding that they are ready to provide evidence once appropriate investigations are launched.

"In view of the fact that loss of the developed ancestral land is pushing Kirimojo's heirs to the brink of bankruptcy and total destitution, I would be very much obliged if you would intervene in this litigious matter," the letter reads in part. The executive Director, West Kenya Legal Aid Centre Mr. Martin Wanyonyi concurs with the Kirimojo family saying that the Bungoma District Surveyor has been an impediment to several land cases in the region.

Mr. Wanyonyi, as a result, calls for the immediate removal of the officer and total overhaul of his office.

"You can hardly find this man in the office as he handles office matters in social places", Mr. Wanyonyi alleges. The district surveyor, Mr. Ezekayo Nganyi on his part asserts that the land parcel No. Kimilili/Kimilili/875 is the property of Kimilili Municipal Council.

Mr. Nganyi claims that the parcel of land was set aside in 1959 for the purposes of creating Kimilili town.

On allegations that he is hardly found in the office, the District surveyor claims that there was a time when he fell sick for two months.

"There is a time I was sick for two months, a fact all my seniors are aware of," He says. Mr. Nganyi, however quickly points out that his duties include going to the field and attending to court cases. "When I am not in the office then I am either in the field or in court", Mr. Nganyi says.

Row erupts over payment of land rates in Murang'a

By MORRIS GITHENYA

LAND owners in Makuyu in Murang'a South district have protested against a move by the council to back date the payment of land rates to 2008.

Speaking during a tension packed meeting at Kenol, the land owners vowed not to pay the rates to the financially crippled Makuyu town council saying over the years it has failed in service delivery. Last month, the council issued notice to individuals with land near Makuyu town directing them to pay land rates dating back to 2008.

During the meeting, the chairman of Makuyu town council Mr John Kabaiku was taken to task by land owners who de-

manded a justification for the payments.

The besieged Kabaiku said he will consult with council officials to explore the possibilities of revising the decision that was endorsed in 2006 by Ministry of Local Authorities. "The matter will be taken before a full council meeting to chat the way forward," said Kabaiku amid protests by land owners.

Mzee Muiruri Ndegwa shocked the meeting when he produced a demand letter from the council directing him to pay Kshs 300,000 failure to which his 2 acres of land would be auctioned. The landowners resolved to lodge complaints with the government as they suspected a foul play.

Meanwhile, irate residents of Karuri

village in Kigumo district of Murang'a County are demanding that the government beefs up security in the area.

Over 500 residents say that criminals had invaded the area and were attacking them with impunity. The residents who spoke during a protest march accused police of abetting crime and failing to respond to their distress calls.

They cited a recent incident where three people were clobbered to death after a gang raided a bar at Karuri market.

Kigumo DC Albanus Ndiso who spoke to the residents assured them of security saying investigations were on going. "We are investigating the issues you have brought up and we will ensure criminals are arrested and arraigned in

court," said the DC.

Elsewhere the Government has ordered the closure of a children's home in Kangema District after it emerged that it was operating in conditions that exposed children to risks.

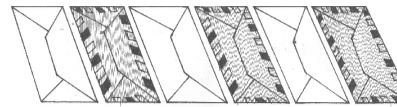
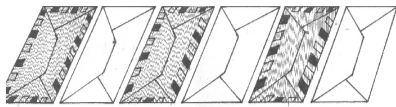
St. Mary's Children home located in Nyagatugu market was ordered closed after investigations revealed that the seventeen children in the home were living in pathetic rental rooms located behind business premises.

The controversy surrounding the facility first emerged in July after a district liquor licensing team, on a mission to inspect beer outlets in the area discovered that children were sharing toilets with bar patrons. "The rental

rooms that have been converted to serve as a children's home are behind business premises and thus expose the lives of innocent children to great risks," said Kangema DC Mr Fred Muli.

The DC further said the management had failed to produce certificates of registration as required to be allowed to operate a charity home.

He directed children office to probe operations of charity homes in the district to apprehend individuals who use the plight of innocent children to solicit money from donors. "We must scrutinize these homes to make sure that destitute children are not used as guinea pigs by people soliciting funds," said Muli.



Gaddafi's tumble signals new challenges ahead

FOR decades, it has been Muammar Gaddafi's conceit that he abolished the conventional state and replaced it with an organic system that empowered the masses.

Now those masses are fast rising up against him, in the process demonstrating how destructive his rule has been. Far from creating concrete institutions, he swept away the very little the country possessed in the way of civil society and political tradition.

But after a half-year of fighting and a final lightning advance, Libyan rebels streamed into the capital Tripoli on recently.

It was greeted by eruptions of euphoria and scenes of jubilant Libyans tearing down posters of the "Supreme Guide of the Revolution," the longest reigning dictator in the Arab world. Indeed, this is a source of great anxiety as his senile system falters.

The death throes of Gaddafi's more than four-decade rule testify to the struggle of the Libyan people, whose courage in the face of tyranny we applaud.

There is also the leadership of British Prime Minister David Cameron, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Nato head Anders Rasmussen who showed faith in the tenacity of the rebels. This strong team, helped avert an atrocity.

As the regime draws ever closer to collapse, these leaders' principle of intervention comes out looking far better in retrospect than the "lead from behind" doctrine of the Barack Obama administration, which was slow in responding to the crisis.

The US was unenthusiastic and irresolute to engage and wished as quickly as possible to hand off the mission to its European allies, but kept a foot in through Nato.

But as the US learned the hard way in Iraq and Afghanistan, toppling a repressive regime is by no means the end of the story. As a new beginning in Libya is contemplated, a different question urgently presses forth: what next?

Reconstruction will be fraught with challenges. Feuding among the rebels already led to the killing of their commander, last month, and now two of his sons. How can they avoid repeating the mistakes of Gaddafi?

**Concerned Kenyan,
Via e-mail**

Our leaders are worst enemies of good law

THE process of the implementation of the new Constitution is in unholy hands of the political elites. Both the Cabinet and the Parliament are guilty of mutilating the supreme law of the land.

Kenyans passed one of the most progressive and democratic Constitution in the world. A year ago, the people gave then the draft Constitution in the world. A year ago, the people for the sake of political expediency. To them, it was an opportune moment to use the document to pacify the masses that were hungry and angry for a new political dispensation.

Since the document was promulgated into law, several attempts have been made to dilute it. In fact, the anti-reform forces have wanted to see the whole process illegitimate. Actions such as insertion of poisonous clauses like threat to national security at the Government Printer, delays to print the document, delays to publish Bills, with-holding of civic education money, clash over devolution of resources between ministry of Local Government and the Treasury, implementation commissioners' salary row, and the convenient interpretation of the law touching on State officers, among others, point to serious threat to the supreme law. This begs answers to the question whether the Government was ever committed to reforms in the first place. Or were MPs enticed with tax exemption to grudgingly support a draft they didn't want? Were they not let to poke holes on the law?

If the latest onslaught on the law governing political parties is anything to go by, then the ruling class is not interested in the change we all believe in. What the leaders care about is self preservation and not the greater na-



Members of Parliament in session. Photo/File

ional good. They are willing to go to any length to bend the law for sectarian interests.

When the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission vetting panel proposes to enlist the help of NISIS to vet nominees to the electoral body, a section of MPs opposed it. Another section have opted to bastardise the Political Parties Act to allow them to engage in party hopping and pre-election deals in contravention of the Constitution.

It is high time Kenyans stood up to be counted. The President and the premier, just like all MPs and Constitutional officer holders swore to protect and uphold the Constitution. Let them do just that to protect it from leaders with dangerous political adventures.

The National Assembly Speaker should use his privileged position to stop Parliament from enacting unconstitutional laws. Our courts too should interpret the laws accordingly throwing out unconstitutional and illegal ones passed by MPs. After all, the current law gives them enormous powers to check the excesses of other arms of Government.

Yes, we have come a long way, but the journey to a new Kenya is far from over. Many forces will continue to rob us of the Canaan we have fought so hard to possess. We are so near, yet too far from the target. Politicians must be selfless. All laws are subordinate to the Constitution, and anything to the reverse is null and void.

**B. Amera,
Nairobi.**

Kenya Power, high prices should not be blamed on rising cost of inputs

REGARDING the debate question recently, "Should Kenya Power charge Kenyans more for electricity", I would like to shed light on how electricity is charged.

First, it is important to state that Kenya Power is a re-seller of electricity bought from KenGen and Independent Power Producers, all of them known as power generating companies.

It does not generate electricity. The price at which Kenya Power buys bulk power is locked in power purchase agreements sanctioned by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC). The bulk prices cannot be varied by the power generating companies nor by Kenya Power until after a price review.

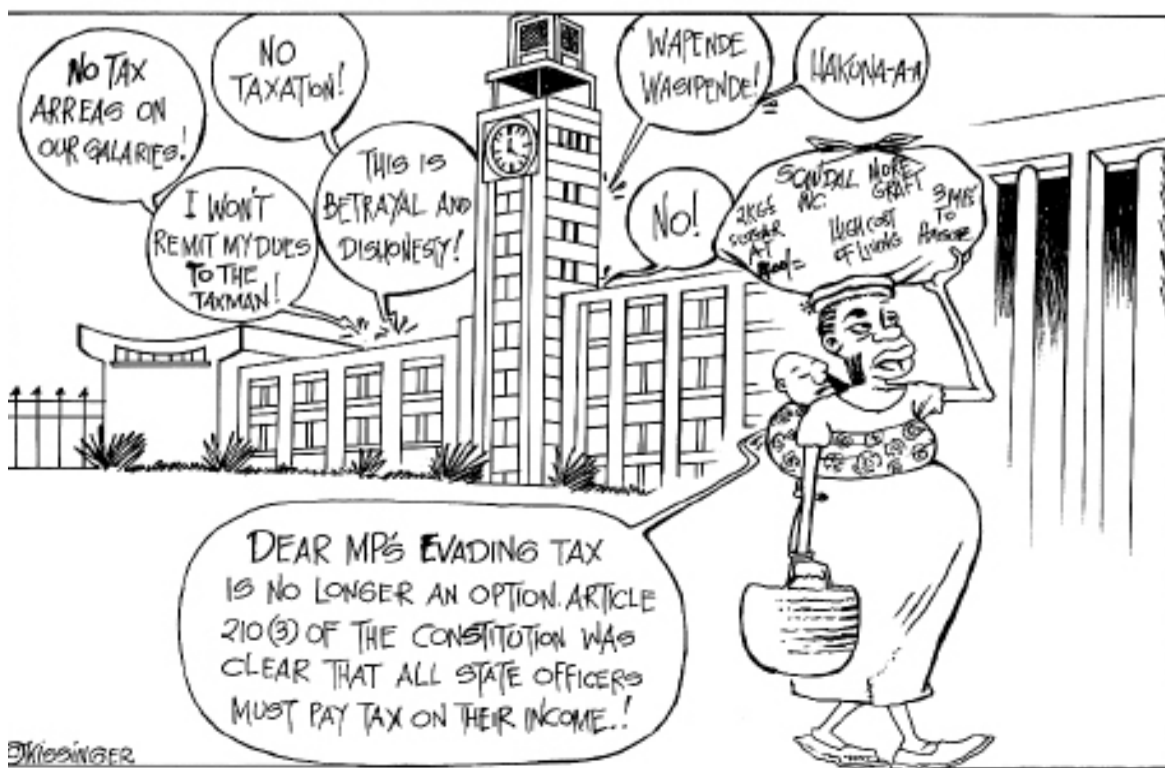
The ERC also sets retail tariffs (the cost payable by customers) to be charged by Kenya Power, which is slightly above the bulk prices to enable it meet its operational and financial needs. These, too, cannot be varied by Kenya Power until after a price review by the regulator. There are however, two variables in the power bill that the electricity sub sector has no control over. These are the fuel cost and foreign exchange adjustments.

Fuel costs are forwarded to Kenya Power by power generating firms that operate thermal power stations which inject into the grid. When customers pay their bills, Kenya Power in turn remits that money in total to the generating companies according to the amount of oil each used to generate power. Fuel cost adjustment is not income to Kenya Power.

Similarly, forex adjustment is directly driven by fluctuations in exchange rate of the dollar vs the shilling, and is the difference between the exchange rate at the time foreign loans were contracted by entities in the electricity sub sector, and the current rate. Being at the end of the power supply chain, Kenya Power collects this money for the sub sector.

This debate seems to suggest Kenya Power has control over the increase in fuel cost and forex adjustment. It does not. It is simply that the cost of these inputs have unfortunately been on the rise.

**Joseph Njoroge, MD & CEO,
Kenya Power**



KISSINGER



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

Write to:

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

Port Reitz residents demand removal of trailers

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

A ROAD leading to a major hospital has become a nightmare for motorists after drivers of cargo trailers turned it into a parking lot and business transaction zone.

Dusty roads and constant traffic jams caused by the trailers, either parked along the road or driving in and out of the cargo yards, have become the norm at Port Reitz.

Once a serene neighborhood with well-lit streets and tarmacked roads, Port Reitz has been invaded by commercial enterprises that have obstructed access to Port Reitz District Hospital situated at the end of the main road.

Critics have accused the district of neglecting the road leading to the complex after its tarmacking three years ago and one would be mistaken to think it is a dust road for lack of maintenance.

Medical Superintendent of Port Reitz District Hospital, Dr. Mary Ochola, says the constant gridlock along the facility has adversely affected movement in and out of the hospital.

The official says staff members report for duty late as trucks are parked haphazardly along the road becoming a major problem to the commuters," says Dr. Ochola.

Speaking to The Link at her office, Dr. Ochola said the operations at the institution have been affected as the staff is always caught up in never ending traffic snarl-ups occasioned by heavy trucks turning along the road leading to the health facility forcing staff to report late for work.

Dr. Ochola says patients referred to the Coast Provincial General Hospital for emergency treatment have been suffering due to the blocking of the roads by trailers that delays referral of patients.

She says it had become a hindrance for patients to reach the hospital in time due to the constant gridlock. The medic says at some time, an expectant mother delivered in a Matatu while on her way to the facility.

"Fetching doctors on call is also a major issue due to the obstruction caused by the trailers," says Dr. Ochola.

The medic says trailers had also contributed to the increasing levels of dust, leading to higher transmission rate of the Tuberculosis (TB) virus.

"The Port Reitz District Hospital specializes in chest infections and the high number of TB infections

could be as a result of the dust raised by the high number of trucks in the neighbourhood," says Dr. Ochola.

The medic says more needs to be done by traffic police officers to control the haphazard parking and constant traffic jams along the Port Reitz Road.

Meanwhile, Changamwe District Commissioner (DC), Mr. Douglas Mutai, says the Mombasa Municipal Council should account for the chaos at Port Reitz due to the haphazard movement and parking of trailers.

Mr. Mutai said if the problem had been controlled by Summit Cove Lines Company Limited that managed parking, especially in the larger Changamwe region.

However, the DC says a competing organization, the Kenya Transport Association, was sued over a tender awarded to Summit Coves Co. Ltd, claiming it was unfairly awarded.

"Since then, parking has been done haphazardly, especially in Port Reitz where most of the container yards are located," says the DC. The

municipal council has since allowed the yards to flourish and should account for the consequences of unplanned development.

The administrator says the council had allowed the change of use of plots in Port Reitz from residential to commercial, setting the stage for the deterioration of a once serene neighbourhood that has been plagued by un-maintained roads, constant traffic jams, dust and noise pollution as most open spaces have been converted to dry port by shipping lines.

"The municipality must urgently address the menace as they are the cause of the problems experienced in the area," says Mr. Mutai.

Mr. Mutai said plans are underway to liaise with the airport management to open an emergency route connecting Moi International Airport and Port Reitz District Hospital.

"This is only a temporary solution," he says, adding that a long-term solution should be urgently sought.

The residents wonder whether the Government officials are aware that

some container yards park petroleum trailers that are a hazard to residents, including students in public schools.

Mombasa Town Clerk, Mr. Tubman Otieno, said his office was aware of challenges faced by Port Reitz residents but the court process has been a setback.

Mr. Otieno said oil tankers are parked in container yards, posing a hazard to residents, including schools and children's homes.

"We had tried to decongest the Port Reitz road and control and regulate parking of Petroleum trailers in the yards and along the road, but as a result of the pending court case, the Municipality can no longer interfere with the matter," said the Town Clerk.

He called for Public Private Partnership in addressing the issue, saying the Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) and Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) should ensure all roads in Mombasa and other regions are maintained and should be held accountable for the maintenance of the Port Reitz road.



Cargo vehicles are becoming a nightmare in Mombasa County.

Wekesa: Forest policies under review

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Government is reviewing forest policies to make them comply with the requirements of the new Constitution, Forestry Minister Noah Wekesa has said.

Wekesa said Forest Act will be amended so that it takes into account the requirements of the devolved system of Government proposed by the Task Force chaired by Moi University Law Lecturer Mutakha Kangu.

He explained that forests will soon be part of the resources to be managed at County level adding that their conservancy programmes will be developed from the grassroots.

"We want all Counties to design measures that will ensure that each constituency attains the 10 percent forest cover as required at the International level," said Wekesa.

The minister explained that forests support about 40 percent of the economy in various districts noting that communities use forest resources as a source of energy, building materials, cottage industry as well as timber.

He said the new policies will be responsive to the emerging challenges facing the forest sector.

He announced that part of the policies will ensure that tree planting remains a continuous exercise in the country as over 120 million tree seedlings are lined up for planting this year.

He said that tree planting exercise will take place in schools, national parks, riversides and semi arid regions as part of the Government initiative in improving forest cover in the country.

Wekesa made the remarks at Lwanda town in Emuhaya constituency where he launched a tree planting exercise.

Emuhaya MP Wilbur Ottichillo and the Kenya Forest Service Western Conservator Dominic Otieno also addressed the meeting. Ottichillo said the shrines in his constituency should be gazetted to guard against grabbing.

He said the encroachment of shrines by residents engaged in farming activities should also be discarded.

The MP explained that some of the shrines served as sources of medicinal plants to the residents and required protection.

He said rain-makers also use the shrines while conducting prayers during the dry season.

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE Public has a key role to play in monitoring utilization of government funds allocated to support development programmes in their respective areas.

Murang'a East DC George Natembeya called on the public to be on the lookout and expose cases where funds are channeled towards the support of ghost projects.

He said that the government allocates millions of shillings towards the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Local Authority Transfer Fund

Natembeya speaks on devolved funds

(LATF) kitties which call for effective monitoring.

Addressing a public meeting at Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga in Kiharu constituency, Natembeya said lack of monitoring had in the past resulted in diversion of funds to ghost projects.

"We must rise up and effectively monitor public funds to make sure they are utilized properly as opposed to supporting non-existent projects at our cost," said Natembeya.

In another function, Natem-

beya said the government will not relent in its efforts to enforce the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act.

Natembeya who is widely known for his campaign against illicit brews, said the government is not interested in reducing number of bars in the region but wants to inculcate a culture of responsible drinking to help restore sanity in the area.

"Our intention is not to reduce the number of beer outlets but to shut down bars operating

near learning institutions and dirty premises," said the DC as he addressed bar operators at County Chambers.

Operators however lamented that the implementation of Mututho law will render most people who rely on the sector jobless.

Led by their chairman James Waweru, operators' said the Alcoholic law will affect the town negatively and urged the government to loosen grip.

Kisumu depot strangled by water Hyacinth

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE Kisumu Inland Container Depot (ICD) is still choking under a thick, green canopy of water hyacinth; more than a decade and a half after the facility was set up in 1995 to bring services closer to users.

All transport activities around the port have largely ground to a halt and its anticipated economic impact has turned into a mirage.

The Deputy Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) Managing Director, Mr. Joseph Atonga, says Kisumu Inland Depot was also expected to enhance cross-border trade between Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

Kisumu ICD, however, still largely relies on Kenya Railways services. "If Kenya Railways services are efficient, the depot would be operational as originally designed."

"Since operations of KR ground to halt decades ago, the ICD has not been operating optimally," says Atonga in an interview with The Link at Mamboleo showground recently.

The Kisumu ICD was supposed to handle containers from Mombasa-Kisumu-Port Bell in Uganda, says Mr. Atonga. "It also covered Nakuru-Kisumu-Port Bell and Mwanza to complete the East African Community (EAC) circuit".

Some of the containers are, however, so huge that they cannot be transported on rails.

"This only meant they had to resort to use of road trucks which seriously destroyed infrastructure, and that is why the Kisumu ICD at Kibos is underutilized," he says.

Some investors, including SDV Transami, an international logistics firm that operates between Mombasa corridor and Kisumu relocated soon after Rift Valley Railways (RVR) raised rail freight charges.

Mr. Atonga said it became uneconomical to use rail transport to move cargo as Transami moved to Eldoret, turning the



Water hyacinth occupying sections of Lake Victoria.

Kisumu ICD into a dormant facility that had been originally expected to anchor the region's economic growth.

But the good news is that KPA has successfully lobbied to take over the management of all ports within Lake Victoria and other water bodies across the country. "With the revamping of Kisumu Port Services, the city will be transformed into a regional economic hub it has been anticipated to be for the EAC partner states," he says.

He says the Kisumu port services have been dormant and KPA is weaning staff levels

from 167 to 60 by moving others to Mombasa and Lamu port where an upgrade project is under way.

Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (LVEMP) Phase II is expected to contribute to the EAC's Vision and Strategy Framework for Management and Development of Lake Victoria basin.

LVEMP II strives for "a prosperous population lives in a healthy and sustainably managed environment providing equitable opportunities and benefits," according to LVEMP II water hyacinth emergency man-

ual removal for 2011.

The LVEMP II National Coordinator, Ms. Francisca Awuor, says the EAC Council of Ministers sitting in Kisumu in January 2011 noted with concern the environmental stress on the lake caused by the severe infestation of the weed.

It also noted the inherent negative socio-economic impact at Kisumu Pier/Kichinjio beach and the Winam Gulf in general. The Council of Ministers, therefore, directed LVEMP II to activate earlier resolutions that deals with the menace in the gulf.

Diarrhea cases rampant in Kwale County

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

CASES of waterborne diseases have increased in Kinango district, Kwale County.

The Kinango Public Health and Sanitation Officer, Mr. Bonaya Bisani, says 9,039 cases of diarrhea have been treated at health facilities since January this year.

The figure is higher than the 4,745 cases that were recorded over the same period last year.

The official attributes the increase in the disease burden to contaminated run-off water that was washed into sources during the long rainy season.

Mr. Bisani says the erratic rainfall in Kinango was only sufficient to wash dirt into earth dams and pans but inadequate to dilute the disease causing organisms to harmless levels.

He said with the rise in temperatures, majority of reservoirs had dried up, leading to higher concentration of pathogens in water.

He said samples from pans and dams at Kasemeni had recorded high concentrations of E-Coli which is a sign that the water has been contaminated with human faces.

Mr. Bisani urged residents to draw water from a community tap had not recorded contamination for domestic use from the source.

Mr. Bisani said public health technicians are carrying out health education at community level to help check an outbreak of diarrhea.

He said demonstrations on how to store and treat drinking water are ongoing since many residents do not know how to ensure food and water are not contaminated.

The official said his office has 22,000 chlorine tablets for distribution to homes for the treatment of drinking water.

He said residents have been unwilling to use chlorine to treat drinking water in the belief that it changes taste but stressed that the process is necessary to check diseases and death, especially among children under five years.

Gov't allocates Kshs30m for fish farming in Busia

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE government has spent Kshs 30 million towards the implementation of the fish enterprise programme under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) in Busia District.

About 1000 farmers have benefitted from the initiative currently ongoing in Nambale, Butula, Funya and Budalangi constituencies.

The Busia Deputy District Fish-

eries Development Officer Henry Zinga says that each of the four constituencies has been allocated Kshs7.5million to facilitate the implementation of the fish farming project.

"The money has helped in the stocking of fish ponds with each farmer being supplied with 1,000 fingerlings together with the fish feeds," adds the deputy fisheries official.

He calls on beneficiaries to form groups that will help coordinate the marketing process to enable them maximize on profits.

The fisheries officer says that at the moment the government is collaborating with Non-Governmental Organizations to train farmers on prudent management of fish farms in a move that seeks to ensure that they reap highly from the enterprise.

"Already a total of 220 farm-

ers have been trained on how to effectively manage their fish farms to enable them reap profits," said the fisheries officer, adding that the lack of knowledge on fish farming has been a major hindrance to effective fish production in the region.

He adds that the government has deployed two field officers in every constituency who will work closely with the farmers to ensure that the project is a success.

"Three aqua shops have also been opened in Samia District on a pilot basis that seeks to guarantee a ready market for the produce and prompt supply of fingerlings before being replicated in other areas," he said.

He appealed to the youths in the district to venture into the project which promises higher returns due to the high demand of fish supply in the market.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

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

Famine in horn of Africa a recipe for conflict

HOW could it happen? That was the question we asked ourselves in 2008 after the post-election violence. This time I am not referring to the post-election violence or the economic growth that is taking place in sub-Saharan Africa where seven of the world's ten fastest growing economies are. When I was in Sweden recently, there was no-one bringing up this issue. I don't even think the rest of the world knows about it. No, everybody asked about the famine. Both newspaper and commercial spots on the television were discussing the famine in Kenya and the Horn of Africa. When I visited a fast-food restaurant, I was asked to give my change to starving people in Kenya. I finally asked myself, how could it happen? How could the situation in Northern

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**HANNA
CARLSSON**

Kenya go so far that the whole world knew about it before Kenyans reacted? Why were we not prepared? I know that a number of institutions, organizations and individuals saw it coming but no-one did anything. Not until it was a disaster that the international community reacted. Also in 2007 the scenario was similar. A number of people and institutions knew that the time after the general election would be chaotic with a lot of violence. Notwithstanding, no-one took any preventive measure! Some people will argue that I am wrong on that point. Some will tell me that the government was informed but did not react because

of political reasons. That may be. Many times preparation and political will are necessary to prevent national disasters. The famine is among others caused by climate change according to meteorological studies commissioned by Barclays. Findings from a research study from the University of Calgary and Environment Canada's climate centre at the University of Victoria argue the same. The atmospheric changes will lead to widespread drought in Africa. If we don't do anything we will probably experience worse droughts in the future. Many times we argue that countries, such as Kenya, have more urgent issues to focus on like poverty reduction, reducing unemployment and resource distribution, than enforcing laws that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, preventive measures are necessary and we need long-term solutions. Otherwise we will continue expe-

riencing severe droughts and food shortage. It is admirable of the international community, the Kenya government and ordinary Kenyans who continue to contribute towards mitigating of the famine situation in northern Kenya and the Horn of Africa. Even so, at the end of the day, no-one wants to live on handouts perpetually. We all want a life of dignity where you are able to support yourself and family. Kenya needs long-term solution, not only to prevent future famines and food shortages but also to prevent conflicts. Meanwhile, the Partnership for Peace will in the next coming months follow up on the policy dialogue initiative. Since the last provincial and national policy dialogue meetings, we have held several one-on-one meetings with other stakeholders aimed at contributing towards promulgation of policies which will give Kenya lasting peace.

Kisumu residents vow to keep peace

BY JOSEPH AWUONDO

THE first ever Kisumu Peace Festival was held 4-6 August 2011 in Kisumu City. The festival was officially opened by the Right Honorable Prime Minister, Raila Oginga and the German Ambassador to Kenya Her Excellency Margit Hellwig-Boett. The two leaders urged Kisumu residents in particular and Nyanze people in general to respect law and order, maintain calmness and embrace their diversities for sustainable peace and development in the city and the region.

Following the bungled 2007 presidential elections, there have been reservations, suspicions and cold relationship among the Kisumu District



PM Raila and German Ambassador Hellwig-Boett arrive in style at the Kisumu Peace Forum.

Residents, the police, politicians, opinion and development leaders. The bitter correlation has negatively affected the city's development and significantly tainted the image. Kisumu up to today has

been called a hotspot, where violence is a daily threat.

Consequently, the Kisumu Peace Festival 2011 was organized to work on a new relationship among the citizens emphasizing the value of di-

versity in cultures and unity in the understanding of peace and development. The festival's main goal was to propagate peace as the basic pre-condition to sustainable

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

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Kalonzo appeals for peace during elections

BY BOB OMBATI

THE Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka has urged Gusii and Kalenjin communities residing along the common border between Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces to maintain peace during the electioneering period.

Kalonzo discouraged individuals who plan to incite their communities to violence as witnessed during 2007 general elections in which 1,133 people lost their lives and over 500,000 were displaced.

The VP asked the two communities to embrace the spirit of brotherhood and resolve conflicts amicably, stressing that incessant conflicts undermined socio-economic and political development.

Kalonzo who spoke at Eronge Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Boarding Primary school in Nyamira county lauded elders from both communities for their ceaseless efforts in preaching peace and resolving conflicts.

"I want to thank the elders from the two communities because they have

been in the forefront of preaching peace among the two communities. We do not want a repeat of the ugly scenario witnessed after the 2007 elections," stated Kalonzo.

The VP noted that the bloodshed and massive destruction of property during the last general elections greatly affected the country's economy and challenged politicians to shun divisive politics and instead focus on reconciliation.

Kalonzo asked Kenyans to shun politicians who preach tribal politics saying that they were enemies of peace. "You should reject leaders who engage in divisive tribal politics as they are the worst enemies of peace," he said.

He urged the Gusii community to elect a visionary and focused leader to steer the country to greater heights of socio-economic development and assured residents of Nyamira county that poor roads in the area will be recarpeted to ease the transportation of their agricultural produce to the markets.

The VP who presided over a fundraiser

for the school said that the institution was affected during the post election violence since it was turned into an IDP camp.

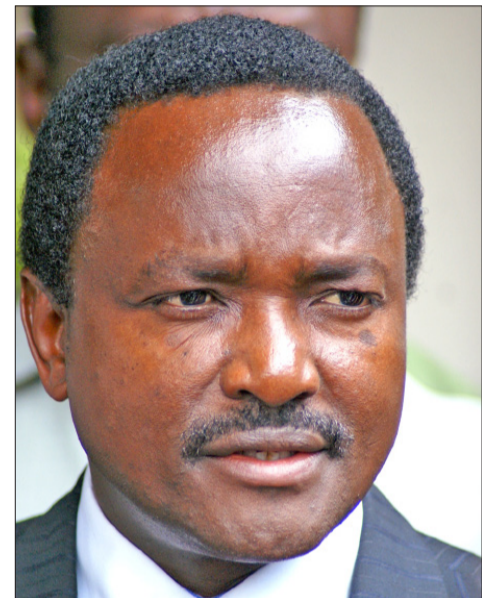
The school's Head teacher Evans Nyauncho said that pupils have contributed about Kshs. 500,000 towards the construction of a peace church monument where the two communities will fellowship as a way of preaching peace and reconciliation.

Nyauncho disclosed that lawmakers from the two communities had agreed to participate in a fundraiser towards the construction and completion of the church.

He told the VP that the school was adversely affected during the post election violence.

"Our pupils witnessed ugly incidents in 2008 and the school management had to hire professional counselors to allow healing to take root," he said.

He however said that children from both communities have since reconciled and today interact freely, saying that once the monument is complete it will



VP Kalonzo Musyoka

further cement the relationship between the members of the two communities who were sharply divided during the violence.

Boundary disputes likely to cause conflicts

BY LUKE KAPCHANGA

BOUNDARY and land disputes have emerged as leading causes of conflict in Western province.

Stakeholders attending a peace network workshop in Bungoma identified land as a major recipe for conflict in the region.

They said that the creation of new electoral and administrative boundaries has further complicated the situation as tension was slowly building around ethnic and cultural attachments.

The participants mainly drawn from non-state actors blamed tribalism and poor political leadership for the current state of affairs adding that more pressure is likely to be witnessed in the build up to next year's General Elections.

Emergence of new media, especially the increased usage of mobile phones, is likely to undermine the ongoing peace processes as perpetrators of violence are able to spread hate messages much faster.

"The use of technologies has introduced new dynamics in conflict management, owing to increased accessibility and wider coverage," said Mr. Jonathan Wesaya Maina, a facilitator.

He noted that the majority of the youths who are in possession of mobile phones lack capacity in peace building and can easily be manipulated to use them for destructive purposes.



Stakeholders attending a peace network workshop in Bungoma identified land as a major recipe for conflict in the region.

The disintegration of moral values in most communities has greatly affected peace building initiatives.

"Most youths hardly respect their elders and refusal to heed to their advice makes them vulnerable to politicians advancing selfish interests," he said.

The community based organizations' in attendance were challenged to fo-

cus on involving vulnerable groups in the community to create lasting peace as majority pay the highest price during clashes.

"You are the people who interact with these vulnerable groups and can understand better the problems afflicting them and therefore impact may be felt more if they play an integral role in

promoting peace in their respect area," adds Wesaya.

He said that most peace initiatives failed because vulnerable groups are hardly involved in campaigns targeting them despite being central to finding last solutions in their communities.

"This calls for a shift from the usual centralized approach where programmes targeting the beneficiaries are confined to a few elites leaving out local expertise which is critical in realizing significant impact," he said.

The civil society actors were challenged to be proactive and ensure that tension is managed before degenerating into violence.

The three day workshop under European Union funded project and implemented by local partners, participants were told to closely monitor issues likely to fan conflicts in the region.

The project prepares participants in being effective in presenting community problems and giving a clear background information on the trends of conflicts.

The project dubbed "Strengthening the capacities of non-state actors" is geared towards mitigating community conflicts in Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western Provinces by enhancing the capacity of community organizations in detecting early warning signs, informal mediation, political analysis, policy oriented conflict research and policy dialogue.



This project is funded by the European Union



This project is implemented by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and her partners and associate

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State rolls out peace rallies in Western

By **JOEL JUMA**

THE Government has rolled out peace campaigns aimed at ending conflicts among the residents of Western province in readiness for the next General Elections.

The peace meetings bring together various tribes residing in the counties to ensure that there is dialogue and peaceful campaigns when the country go for the next elections.

Western PC Samuel Kilele said council of elders, women leaders, religious organisations and youths have been brought on board to ensure that politicians do not drag them into their political party differences when campaigns kick off.

"We want peace to prevail in each County. We have some sub-tribes that may not get positions in the Counties for being minority but dialogue should be initiated to balance sharing of the positions," said Bishop Titus Khamala of Cornerstone ministries.

Khamala explained that some communities were already disadvantaged in the County politics as they may not get any of the seats due to their inability to mass the required numbers.

The meeting at Magharibi Hall brought together council of Elders lead-



Participants at one of the political rallies in Western Kenya. Photo/File

ers from Kakamega, Busia, Bungoma and Vihiga Counties.

Former Cabinet minister Burudi Nabwera, Luhya Council of Elders Forum Chairman Patrick Wangamati, his Saboat counterpart in Mt Elgon Puala Naibei

and their Teso colleague Eliud Okiring' attended the meeting that did not have any female representation.

Former Butere/Mumias County Council Education Committee chairperson Elizabeth Anziya said it was shock-

ing that none of the Elders Council had women representation.

But The Luhya Council Secretariat official Julius Nyarotho said the forum was not a constitutional body, which must have women representation.

Former DC Harry Wamubeyi and Nyarotho said the aspect of gender has been factored in the council's committee as women and youths were part of the members.

Naibei said that peace initiatives have already kicked off in Mt Elgon adding that communities from various clans were working well in development of the region. He said tree-planting sessions have seen former members of the disbanded Saboat Land Defence Forces being involved in the re-afforestation programmes.

Kilele said it was sad that many residents do not understand why they were involved in post election violence. He said that the Government wants peace to prevail in the Counties so that the next polls were not chaotic.

"Our economy went down due to violence and such a thing should not be repeated again," said Kilele.

He explained that churches and mosques will be used as avenues of preaching peace to ensure that politicians do not reverse the trend.

Kisii-trans Mara residents to guard against conflict

BY **BOB OMBATI**

AS the clock ticks towards the 2012 general elections, communities along Kisii- Transmara common border have formed peace committees to resolve emerging forms of conflict.

Recently, about 70 members of the Active Citizens Initiative Group in Gucha South District were trained on peace building and conflict resolution along Kisii- Transmara and South Nyanza common border.

The Rongo District Officer One (DO 1) Ami Ruria who presided over their graduation ceremony said that the members had been trained on peace building and conflict resolution, in a programme sponsored by the British Council, Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and National and Constitutional Affairs and peace Net, a Non-Governmental Organization.

"The peace makers will be expected to forestall any flare ups along the

common borders that may arise from heightened political temperatures and tensions during the electioneering period," said Ruria.

The provincial administrator urged the peace makers to share their experiences with members from other border communities to avert any forms of politically triggered violence as witnessed during the 2007 disputed presidential poll.

Ruria, flanked by his Gucha South counterpart, David Tegutwa and Active Citizens Initiative chairman, Samson Nyandoro advised the peace makers to shun political leaders who divided them along ethnic lines as they were enemies of the people and peace.

She challenged the youth to venture into income generating activities to boost their standards of living instead of waiting for politicians to give them handouts which cannot sustain their lives.

"Do not allow yourselves to be mis-

used by bad leaders who are only interested in ascending to power," said Ruria.

She urged parents to support the youth by allocating them land to enable them venture into income generating activities to be self reliant.

She said that it would be difficult for peace to thrive in an environment where rights of individuals are violated by families and asked the ambassadors of peace to cultivate peace with their families and preach the same to others.

The officer noted that peace was imperative for any country to realize meaningful development and challenged chiefs to collaborate with peace committees, members of the public, community policing and security agents to enhance peace within and along the borders of their respective communities.

Tegutwa told the peacemakers to embrace virtues of nationalism and shun the tribal tag which only served to

identify them, adding that peace building and conflict resolution was part and parcel of performance contracting between the provincial administrators and the government.

The DO challenged the youth to take advantage of the Enterprise Fund to venture income generating projects that will help empower them economically.

Nyandoro, who returned from Wales, Britain after attending a government sponsored peace training workshop said peace committees from Gucha South and Rongo will visit their Borabu-Sotik counterparts to share his experiences.

Nyandoro, who is the chairman of the Active Citizens initiative challenged parents to inculcate good morals to their children to help them grow up as responsible and accountable citizen, saying that morality, respect for human rights, economic empowerment and good governance were key in enhancing peace, development and peaceful coexistence.



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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

Kisumu residents vow to keep peace

From Page 15

development. Only when peace is established in the region, development and prosperity can take place and bring Kisumu forward in the future, the residents were told.

The Kisumu Peace Forum, a major part of the annual Festival, was held to create an opportunity for the residents and peace actors in Kisumu to meet and agree on a process in developing peace objectives and action towards the elections in 2012 and beyond.

The Forum discussions were held on 5th August 2011 at Kisumu Hotel. Participants were drawn from the District Peace Committees (DPCs), civil society, the Government and political parties. The discussions, which were lead by panelists from various institutions, focused on political pluralism, democratic ideas, civic education, devolution, equity, and affirmative action.

The participants noted that these areas are critical to sustainable peace and development



PM Raila Odinga and Hellwig consult during festival.



Guests are being entertained during the festival.

in the country. The participants identified the people's participation and a spirit of dialogue and inclusion as vital elements for good governance, leadership and democracy. Participants emphasized the need for regular dialogue and grassroots mobilization, organization and education.

The forum agreed that:

- Governmental and nongovernmental cooperation of peace actors assisted by national and international partner organizations

on District, County and national levels should be maintained.

- Kisumu Residents should establish all-inclusive structures at various levels to work for peace.

- Equity in distribution of resources and power should be guaranteed.

- Transitional justice mechanisms for handling PEV atrocities through better legal aid, compensation and witness protection should be instituted to bring justice and reconciliation

- Capacity building programs for new County governments and local civil society organizations should be initiated and funded.

- New concepts of civic education and awareness in understanding new constitutional provisions, national peace policy and voter rights focusing on inter-ethnic, inter-generational dialogue and political opinions tolerance should be developed

- Structures to guard against corruption in counties should be established at county levels.

- Mechanisms for formal citizen's participation in budgeting, decision making and oversight role in Local governance should be established.

CONTACT ADDRESSES:

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

P.O. Box 668, 40100 Kisumu,
Telephone. +254 057 2023 484
+254 711 358 013

e-mail: partnershipforpeace@gmail.com

PARTNERS

Mt. Elgon Residents Association (MERA)

Chem Ngeywo, Project Coordinator
Western Province
P.O. Box 21-50201, Cheptais, Mt. Elgon
Mobile : 0720-744827; 0734-517489.
Email: pchem2007@yahoo.com

Community Initiative Action-Group (CIAG-K)

Mr. Chrispin Owalla, Project Coordinator
Nyanza Province
Varsity Apartments 3rd Floor,
P.O. Box 668, 40100 Kisumu.
Tel: 0737-470558/0716-384135
grassrootlink@yahoo.com or
ciag-kenya@hotmail.com

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC)

Mr. James Kimisoi, Project Coordinator
Rift Valley Province
The Catholic Diocese of Eldoret
P.O. Box 842-30100, Eldoret.
Tel 2031272; 0722-448110
E-mail: jameskimisoi@yahoo.com



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Nomads told to surrender guns

By PETER MUTUKU

EASTERN PC, Claire Omollo, has told armed nomadic pastoralists seeking refuge in Kitui County to surrender illegal guns to the Government to help cultivate harmonious coexistence with host communities.

Speaking in Machakos recently during a meeting with District Officers from lower Eastern Province, Ms Omollo said District Security Committees would be forced to disarm the groups forcefully if illegal guns are not surrendered. The PC said the invasion by nomads was a delicate issue because some landowners had rented out land for grazing to the pastoralists.

She said dialogue was the best solution to the conflict that has erupted after nomads allegedly started grazing livestock on private land and farms in Tseikuru, Mwingi East, Mutito and Mutomo Districts.

In Mutito and Mutomo Districts, the pastoralists are alleged to have fed camels on flowering mango trees and other irrigated crops on Thua Valley in Mutito and Mutomo Districts.

The PC said peace committees in each District should regulate the use of pasture and water.

Meanwhile, Mwingi District Forest Officer, Mr John Njoroge has urged charcoal transporters to form groups to ease operations.

Njoroge said it would be easier for groups to obtain charcoal movement permits rather than individual members. He said small scale transporters cannot afford movement permits and unions would guard against frequent arrests of transporters for lack of permits.

Njoroge says his officers had arrested eight people who were transporting the commodity without a movement permit, adding that movement of the product must be regulated to control wanton destruction of trees in the region's fragile ecosystem.

The Official urged the public to cooperate with the government to safeguard the environment.

The chairman of the Mwingi Charcoal Transporters Mr Joseph Kimwele said the community was engaging in charcoal business as a survival measure due to the prevailing famine and asked the Government to consider relaxing some requirements for charcoal transporters as a temporary measure to rescue the community out of the biting famine conditions.

Kimwele said they were aware of the effects of the wanton destruction and were sensitizing the public on safe ways of harvesting of trees without destroying the environment.

They were also sensitizing the public on the need to plant more trees in line with the Government's goal of maintaining a 10 percent forest cover.

Malaria still the biggest threat to children in western

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

MALARIA has been singled out as the leading cause of child mortality in Western Province.

Out of every 1,000 live births, 121 children die of the disease, contributing to 30 per cent of the deaths.

The Western Provincial Director of Public Health, Dr. Quido Ahindukha, says 90 per cent of the region was prone to waterborne diseases, with Lugari and Mt. Elgon districts being the epidemic zones.

Dr. Ahindukha says the Government has initiated intervention measures, including free distribution of treated nets, vector control through spraying, free treatment and preventive treatment where expectant mothers are given medicine to prevent them from infection.

This, he added, has reduced the number of outpatients seeking malaria treatment in hospitals from 50-30 per cent.

He said the Government has scaled up the distribution of nets in the province to curb the spread of malaria and enhance child survival. At least two members per household have received treated mosquito nets.

The programme, he added, has been hampered by members of the community in lower and upper parts of the region who use the nets to set up kitchen gardens and fishing in part of Busia. "Using the nets for the intended purpose remains a challenge in these areas dealing a major blow to the war against malaria," he said.

He said traditional beliefs, sects and some church organizations that bar patients from seeking medical treatment were also derailing the fight



Mosquito: Malaria has been singled out as the leading cause of child mortality.

war on the deadly disease.

"By the time they are coming for treatment, the condition is unmanageable resulting to death," he said.

The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, he said, was working with the Provincial Administration to enhance proper use of nets and sensitize the communities on the need to seek early treatment that has been offered free of charge.

He said the programme is expected to also reduce the number of outpatients seeking treatment to 25 per cent.

In an interview with The Link, Dr. Ahindukha said the Department of Public Health and Sanitation in collaboration with APHIA Plus and Unicef has set up 160 community units to scale up the fight against the disease.

The GSU are located in all sub locations in the region and are expected to sensitize communities on proper use of mosquito nets and the need to seek early treatment.

Two thirds of child mortality rates in Kenya are reported in Western,

Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces.

Nyanza leads by 29 per cent, followed by Western at 18 per cent and Rift Valley with 17.2 per cent.

Although Malaria is the leading cause of deaths for children under five years, diarrhea, malnutrition and poor breastfeeding have also been cited as key contributors.

Dr. Ahindukha said proper personal hygiene can reduce the deaths by 20 per cent, while proper breastfeeding can reduce children's deaths by 25 per cent.

Boda bodas rule Kakamega road transport

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

TRANSPORTING passengers and luggage on bicycles commonly known as Boda Boda has employed many youth in Kakamega town.

A walk along roads and streets shows bicycle taxi operators are key players in the town's transport system. The operators, however, face numerous problems.

"I have been ferrying passengers and loads for five years since I completed my primary education and have a family of three," says Mr. Mark Okutoyi, a sole

bread winner for the family.

"Roads should be designed with specific lanes for bicycle operators in order to reduce congestion and to avoid collision with motorists," Mr. Okutoyi says. A place near the main bus terminus is a sight full of operators sweet-talking and trying to convince potential passengers to board bicycles.

"Here it is a case of survival for the luckiest as passengers may just passby you even if you use a courteous and friendly language," says John Omondi.

Mr. Omondi says municipal

askaris often order them out of the Central Business District (CBD) where most of potential passengers are. Another operator, Mr. Job Amutavi says the business has potential to flourish and has asked the town planners to include it in the roads network plan.

"Public service vehicle crews should observe the rule of picking and dropping passengers only at designated points to ensure smooth flow of traffic on roads," says Mr. Amutavi. Rough streets with huge potholes make business difficult for the operators as wires break, tyres tear and in some cas-

es rims are deformed," says Mr. Amutavi.

I get about Kshs.300 daily and have to service and repair my bicycle three times a week at a cost of about Kshs.250, which translates into around Kshs.750 each week," he says.

The funds spent on repairs and replacement significantly slashes the weekly earnings of about Kshs2,100.

Reports have indicated that the operators have been unable to perform matrimonial duties, leading to quarrels with spouses.

Those who take up the job are mainly primary and secondary school leavers and college graduates who have not secured gainful employment who have asked the Government to streamline the business.

Stakeholders have urged the Government to initiate courses that would enlighten the operators on basic traffic rules so as to reduce accidents. Pedestrians are also supposed to at all times use their pavements and leave the central part of the road to the motorists and other machines.

New malaria control method praised

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

INTEGRATED Vector Management (IVM) has turned into one of the best alternative methods in preventing vector-borne diseases, such as Malaria.

Dr. Charles Mbogo of the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) says IVM was a

rational decision making process for the optimal use of resources for vector control. He was speaking recently during a second convergence of the sixth KeNAAM Fresh Air Conference in Kisumu County on Malaria control.

He said two sites had been picked in Kenya and Ethiopia to implement IVM approaches.

"The use of microbial larvicides, scaling of bed nets and active community participation has been adopted by IVM. The environmentally safe microbial larvicides are applied monthly by trained people from the community," he says.

The method involves reduction of Malaria infection by using

ecologically and environmentally friendly malaria control approaches.

Mr. Mbogo says by 2010, there was a drop in Anopheline larvae and adults observed in all the three sites. No anopheles tested positive for plasmodium parasite, leading to lower human-vector contact and transmission.

Sabatia Eye Hospital opens new department

By JOEL JUMA

MOBILE telephone service provider Safaricom has injected over Kshs2.3 billion towards the improvement of its network in Western Kenya.

The project dubbed "Western Focus" has seen three workstations upgraded to improve on the quality of internet and other services.

Safaricom Chief Executive Officer Bob Collymore said modernisation of the network's infrastructure has seen customers get better services.

"Safaricom has invested heavily in a G3 network, the only one of its kind in Kenya. It is a strategy that has seen us garner a huge lead in the market," said Collymore.

He said the move seeks to improve network coverage in areas that were being faced with connection difficulties.

He named areas that will benefit from the boosters as Lubao, Kisii, Kisumu and all parts of the Kakamega County.

Collymore was speaking at Sabatia Eye Hospital in Vihiga County during the official opening of the optical service department.

The department was built with sponsorship from Safaricom and the community to the tune of Kshs10 million.

The Deputy Prime Minister Musalia Mudavadi, Director of Ophthalmic Services in the Ministry of Medical Services Francis Gichangi and the hospital's Chief Executive Officer Samuel Tsimwela also addressed the meeting.

Collymore said the firm would continue to collaborate with communities to initiate health, education and agricultural projects.

He noted that Sabatia Eye Hospital was one of the projects funded by Safaricom this year as part of its social corporate responsibility.

The coordinator of a Germany sponsored Christian Blind Mission Nathanael Bascom said a three-month training for clinical officers and nurses at the facility is underway.

Bascom said the initiative will see the number of health workers specialising in eye care go up.

Mudavadi challenged residents to make use of the hospital to solve their eye related problems.

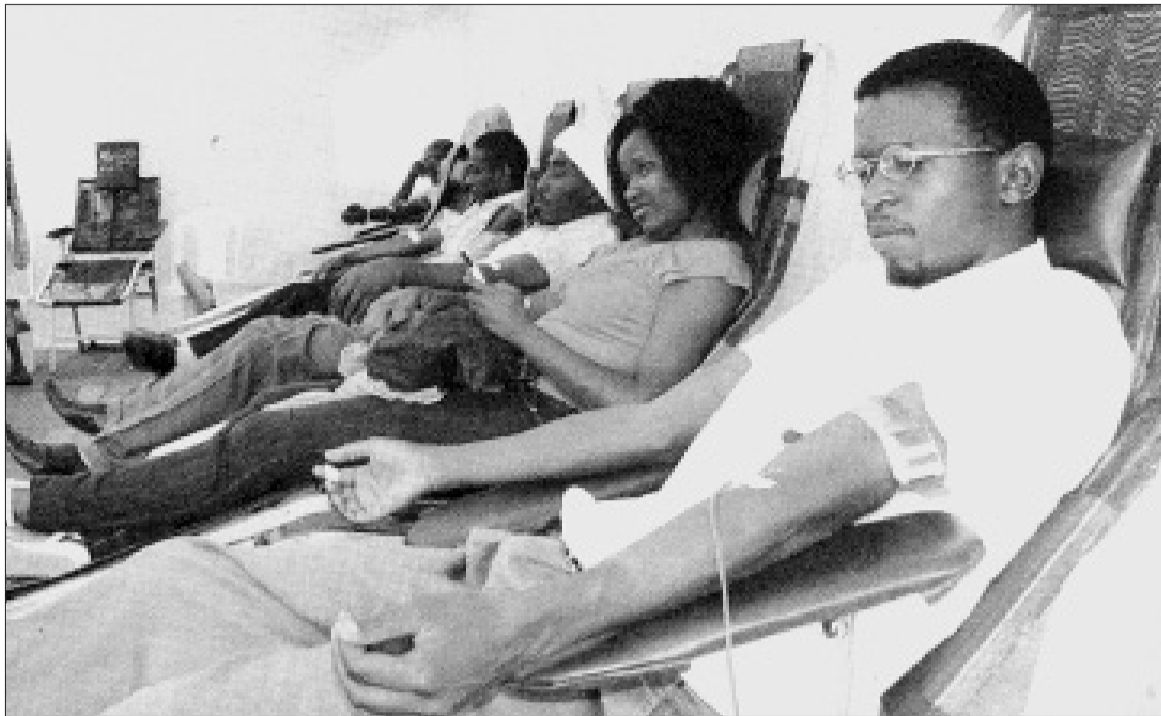
He explained that the hospital would be equipped with glasses to avoid relying on suppliers from Nairobi and other countries.

Mudavadi noted that the hospital offers optical services to patients from as far as Southern Sudan and Uganda.

Mudavadi who is the Minister for Local Government said the facility should be expanded as it offers training to students from higher institutions.

Tsimwela said the hospital is collaborating with the University of Nairobi, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology and the Kenya Medical Training College in research and training programmes.

Blood donations galore at the Coast



Blood donation: Fear among some Kenyans of being informed of their HIV status has led to declining number of donors.

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

NINE hundred and seven units of blood were collected in the coastal region in the recent World Blood Donation day against a target of 1,000 units.

The collection surpassed last year's total of 633 units and the success of the drive in the region has been attributed to aggressive media campaigns, partnerships with corporate bodies, universities, schools and colleges. A Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), Hope Worldwide that deals directly with local communities also participated in the drive.

The blood bank in Coast region faces severe shortages due to apathy among residents towards donation due to fear of being tested for HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Kitunga Mangi, the Regional Director for the Blood Transfusion Centre, said a unit of blood can save up to three lives and fear for HIV test should not arise since nobody can be tested without consent.

This year's theme of the World Blood Donor Day was 'More Blood, More Life' that reinforced the urgent need for donors to become life savers through regular donations.

The 58th World Health Assembly made a unanimous declaration of commitment to voluntary donation. The resolution designated World Blood Donor Day as an annual event to be held every June 14. The day is meant to create awareness on the importance of voluntary donation and encouraging more regular donors without reward.

The official said the biggest challenge was lack of awareness among wananchi, high demand compared with collection, cultural and religious beliefs and the over-reliance on donor funding.

"In coast region, there is high dependence on secondary students who give 80 per cent of the blood. Shortages are experienced during school holidays, this is a challenge as demand for transfusion is con-

tinuous and many hospitals cannot meet existing needs," said Mangi.

He expressed the need for safe and secure supplies of blood and its products. Blood transfusion is a vital component of health care and threat to life due to insufficient blood stocks calls for safe and adequate supply for those who require transfusion. As the need increases globally, the youth are expected to donate and recruit peers to become donors.

At least 90 million units are donated annually to save lives and improve health. Estimates by the Ministry of Health show the national target is 200,000 units against a population of 40 million. The regional target should be 22,000 units, but only 13,000 were collected in 2010. This means some lives were lost due to lack of blood.

Centres that were used included Ramisi Secondary School and Shimba Hills National Park in South Coast, Katana Ngala Secondary School and Ngala Memo-

rial in North Coast.

Gordon Majiwa, a resident of Mombasa, has donated blood a record 53 times and aims to hit a target of 100. He is a member of Zamzam Blood Donors Club which was formed in 2009 by 25 members. Mr. Majiwa urged others to join the group in order to demystify myths on transfusion.

Ms. Farida Swaleh has been donating for the past 9 years and has urged others to donate; saying women are hesitant to give because of cultural and religious beliefs.

Everywhere, blood and blood products are needed for routine and emergency surgery. These include life saving treatment for a growing number of those injured in road accidents and for treating disorders.

After the blood is drawn from donor, it is stored in a polythene bag for restoration to normal temperature by a chemical anti-coagulant before it is taken for grouping and testing to determine the blood type, including O+, A, B, AB.

It is then tested for infectious diseases such as HIV/Aids, Hepatitis B and C and syphilis. It is then separated into different products that are stored at various temperatures because of their separate nature using an anti-coagulant. The Facility stops blood from clotting with products holding different storage spans that range from 10 to 35 days after donation.

The products are finally distributed to public medical centres for free use but private institutions must pay Kshs.300 per unit. If at the screening stage the blood is found to be infected with any disease, it is segregated and quarantined for research. In case of infection, donors are given results and counseled with instructions on how to seek medical attention from hospitals.

In order to ensure cleanliness, the equipment used to draw blood, including used syringes, are disposed of by burning at 800 degree Celsius.

Plans a foot to align NEMA with new law

By PETER MUTUKU

PLANS are underway to align the operations of the National Environmental Management Authority with changes outlined in the Constitution.

The Acting Nema Director General Ayub Macharia says that structures will be set up to ensure that Kenyans enjoy the benefits of a clean and healthy environment as espoused in the Constitution.

Macharia says most areas in the country are premised to undergo major physical transformation to create room for the County structures.

"It is anticipated that there will be unmatched movement of people from rural areas to major urban centres due to pull factors like employment, commerce and education opportunities. Population growth in these urban centres without commensurate infrastructure development and proper planning

is a major concern for Nema," he affirms. Dr Macharia says that historical assessment of major towns that have gone through similar transformations in Kenya does not paint a good environmental picture.

"Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu are still grappling with air and water pollution, poor waste management and ill advised constructions on wetlands. To compound the problem, the mushrooming of slums and traffic jams make it difficult to enforce environmental standards," adds the acting Director.

Most urban centres lack effluent treatment facilities, and when they exist they are located near water bodies.

He says that cities like Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu more often than not discharge some of their effluent into rivers, lakes and the Indian Ocean. The situation could get worse if it is not well managed as sewer dis-

charge and industrial waste is bound to increase with the anticipated urban population spurt.

The Director General says that Nema will come up with proper guidelines on how waste such as petro-chemicals and metals from industries and jua kali sheds as well as grease from the busy roads must be disposed off.

"In many instances waste is mixed with sewer discharge that are seldom pre-treated. Some of this waste is discharged into our rivers. Illegal car wash spots that have sprung due to greater demand for this service have also increased the discharge of hydrocarbons into rivers," Dr Macharia says.

"In the 2010/2011 financial year, we have inventorised 156 illegal discharges along Ngong River of which 29 were stopped. Much of the discharge was from the Kibera and

Mukuru slums."

To ensure that liquid waste is properly managed, the authority has directed all water and sewerage companies to inspect their sewerage infrastructure regularly. Landlords with residential blocks have been asked to connect their buildings to sewer lines or ensure that they exhaust their septic tanks regularly. Alternatively they can install onsite waste water treatment facilities.

Owners of car wash businesses located near water bodies but do not have oil water interceptors have been put on notice and motorists who give them business will be liable for prosecution. The disposal of solid waste and plastic bags is hampered by inadequate refuse collection systems. Nema says that 40 to 50 percent of waste generated in urban centres is not collected and ends up in illegal dumpsites.

State lays plans for increasing forest cover

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government with support from development partners is set to spend over Kshs3 billion towards conservancy programmes, key among them the improvement of the country's forest cover.

Currently, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is compiling data on the number of trees on the farms and those in the forests.

KFS said several partners among them, the Governments of Japan, Finland and the World Bank have offered to finance the project.

KFS Director David Mbugua said the Government of Japan has pledged over Kshs1 billion to be used in creating a forest inventory.

Forests to be covered include Mau, Koibatek, Karura, Kakamega, Mt Elgon and Abadars.

Mbugua noted that the Government of Finland has allocated Kshs 2 billion towards the improvement of the forest cover.

"The Government will use these funds to fence shrines and selected forests to prevent communities from encroaching these natural resources," said Mbugua.

He said stock taking would also ascertain the value of the trees in various parts of the country.

Mbugua explained that statistics by KFS indicate that there are 140,000 hectares of land under trees but said that the matter needs to be evaluated afresh to ascertain the extent of human destruction on the forests.

"The data needs to be compiled afresh as we have had recovery of forest land in Mau after families were evicted from the water tower," he added.

He disclosed that Forestry Minister Noah Wekesa and his Environment counterpart John Michuki are set to tour Mau Forest to assess the progress made in restoring the water tower.

Mbugua was speaking at Ebusiekwe Shrines in Emuhaya District during a tree planting exercise.

Western Provincial Head of Conservancy Dominic Otieno, his Nyanza counterpart Fred Ogoombe and Emuhaya MP Wilbur Ottichilo were also present.

Mbugua said the Government would use satellite machines to take an inventory of trees stock in certain parts of the country.

He explained that forest associations formed by communities would also be strengthened to protect the environment.

He challenged MPs to map out shrines in their constituencies and ensure that they are protected. He pointed out herbalists sourcing medicinal plants for their personal benefits are destroying some of the shrines.

Envoys vow to seek investors for Kitui coal

By KAVYU-KURA

AMBASSADORS and high commissioners representing Kenya in other countries have pledged to source for investors who can inject capital in the mining of the vast coal deposits in Kitui County.

Speaking during a recent familiarization tour of the Mui Basin in Mwingi East district that is endowed with millions of metric tons of Coal and Methane gas, the ambassadors vowed to market the coal project to wealthy investors in their countries of posting.

Ambassador Ali Abbas, who headed the delegation of about 20 diplomats, said the visit to Mwingi was an eye opener for them. He said they would thus market the coal mining project to investors from a largely informed and knowledgeable point of view.

"It is now for us to grasp the opportunity to convince international investors of the huge business potential presented by coal mining as this project required huge capital investments which are not available locally," noted Abbas.

Ambassador Josephine W. Gaita noted that the mining and the processing of coal had a great potential of turning around not only the local economy but also of the entire country at large.

Gaita who is also the Permanent representative to the United Nation

Organisations (FAO, WFP and IFAD) said the coal deposits had a potential of turning Mwingi into an export processing zone.

The envoys were conducted in the extensive tour of the coal fields that saw them visit the Kateiko coal well in the outskirts of Mathuki trading centre by the chief geologist in the Ministry of Energy Engineer John Omenge.

Eng. Omenge noted that the coal fields spanned some 500 square Kilometers and were rich with coal deposits exceeding 400 million metric tons as found out in the 70 wells already sank. He said there was need for serious investors to be invited to do the mining.

Noting that the coal would specifically be intended for domestic power generation, Eng. Omenge pointed out that there was however a provision that allowed the government to export surplus coal.

Eng. Omenge said that sufficient regulations were in place to ensure the locals were not disadvantaged in the process of mining coal. He said environment and Social impact assessment would be carried out to ensure people were not hurt and those displaced were sufficiently compensated and resettled.

The Mwingi East District Commissioner Martin Mwaro noted that with the agricultural sector increasingly becoming unreliable, coal mining and extraction is expected turn the



Eng. John Omenge shows the envoys samples of coal collected from various wells. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

area into an industrial hub.

"It is due to the industrial potential of this area with the huge coal deposits that sufficient support is required from development partners and wealthy countries who can help us exploit this valuable resource to our advantage," said DC Mwaro.



Ministry of Energy Chief Geologist Eng. John Omenge explains a point to the envoys during the tours of Mui basin in Mwingi East district. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Churches join forces to help ill children

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

TWO churches have teamed up to help mentally ill children from Bungoma town.

Emmaus Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) and Comrie Church Parish of Scotland are set to offer craft, tailoring and drawing courses to the affected children to give them a productive future.

The vicar in charge of RCEA Rev. Joseph Barasa is consequently appealing to parents

with such children to enroll them in the programme.

Rev. Barasa says that the beneficiaries will receive free tuition and learning materials throughout their course study period.

He, however, quickly points out that the first batch of learners will not be accommodated at the college but all will be day scholars.

"We will assist the beneficiaries while in the hands of their parents or guardians. However,

we will after some time offer boarding facilities to the learners," Rev. Barasa says during an interview with *The Link*.

He discloses that meanwhile the church will start with at least 15 learners in the programme that is scheduled to commence in October this year.

The church minister says that already the church through other churches, Non-Governmental organizations and state agents has started to identify

Peter Kenneth's advise to the youth

By MORRIS GITHENYA

PLANNING and National Development Assistant Minister Peter Kenneth has urged youth to brace themselves for key roles in agenda setting in the next government instead of serving as youth wingers for political bigwigs.

Kenneth said the youth must spearhead their own agenda instead of being lured to supporting leaders who represent the old order.

Speaking at St Mary's Cathedral Catholic Church in Murang'a during Diocesan Youth Day, Kenneth who is also Gatanga MP challenged youth to elect leaders those who have their interest at heart. The celebrations brought together youth from Kirinyaga and Murang'a counties which fall under Catholic Diocese of Murang'a.

"Time is ripe for youth to rally their support behind one of their own instead of being coerced to vote in leaders who will later fail to meet their expectations," said Kenneth. He said the youth should unite countrywide and go for leadership with a defined agenda that will ensure creation of more opportunities and reduction of poverty.

The Assistant Minister said the next government must come up with a programme tailored to empower the youth and ensure they have a bright future instead of being dependant of others.

Murang'a Catholic Diocese Bishop James Maria Wainaina shared similar sentiments saying the youth must engage in meaningful activities instead of indulging in drugs and alcoholism.

He said the youth require guidance and must be prepared to take up country's leadership as they have leadership potential.

"However, to qualify for leadership positions, the youth must shun being part of illegal sects, alcoholism and drug abuse," advised the Bishop.

Pope's representative in Kenya Archbishop Alain Paul Lebeaupin in his speech called upon youth to shun negative lifestyles which have side effects later in life.

By JOEL JUMA

AS cane shortage continues to wreck havoc in Kakamega County, farmers have challenged the Government to release the Kshs500 million allocated for cane development to manage the shortage.

Farmers drawn from Mumias and West Kenya sugar belts say that the amount in question was allocated for cane development in the last financial year and should be disbursed to the growers.

The Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) elect directors Billy Wanjala and Mohammed Mukhwana lament that the funds have not been disbursed despite being allocated for cane development.

Wanjala and Mukhwana note that the board was disbanded before the funds could be disbursed adding that the money was still intact at the board.

"It is us who should go back and approve the release of the money and not the technical experts working for the body," adds Wanjala who was speaking to farmers in Mumias town.

Farmers led by Mumias Sugar Cane Growers Association chairman Simon Wesechere have petitioned Government to act on the cane shortage to avert the closure of sugar factories.

The association, which has written to the Kenya Anti Corruption Commission (KACC) to probe KSB over the funds, insists that it is unfair for millers to harvest premature cane whereas funds have been allocated for development.

West Kenya Sugar Factory has raised alarm over lack of adequate cane to meet its crushing capacity.

The Company's Head of Human Resource and Administration Michael Mechumo, reveals that the crushing

Sugarcane farmers demand immediate release of cane fund



Sugar plantation: Farmers have challenged the Government to release the money allocated for cane development to manage the shortage.

capacity has been reduced from 3,500 daily to less than 1,000 tones.

The move has also made the company to lay off over 500 workers and another 300 loaders.

Wanjala and Mukhwana say they want Agriculture minister Sally Kosgey to constitute the board for it to ap-

prove the release of the Kshs 500 million that had been allocated for cane development.

Wanjala also said the dispute between farmers in Busia and Management of Mumias Sugar Company over the sale of Nasewa farm can only be resolved once Kosgey constitutes the

board.

Wanjala said it was sad that MSC was auctioning the property of farmers in Busia on a wrong debt.

"We have an audited report indicating that the debt Mumias need to

recover from Busia Sugar Company amounts to Kshs 69 million and not the Kshs 100 million," said Wanjala.

Wanjala says MSC was acting against the law as the land belongs to the Government. He explains that the board was not aware of the sale of the BSC land and the matter need to be reversed.

"We shall embark on sourcing for an investor. Land must be there for the installation of the machines to take place," adds Wanjala who is a Director representing the zone.

Busia Out Growers Company (Boco) chairman Stephen Omuse has also opposed plans by MSC to take over the Nasewa farm. Omuse says Kacc needs to act on the concerns raised by the residents.

The West Kenya sugar zone elect director Ewing Mwombe backed Wanjala's sentiments. "We are united to block the sale of the Nasewa farm as a second miller is required in Mumias sugar belt," said Mwombe.

KSB elect Directors have challenged sugar millers not to reduce the price of cane as the price of the commodity has gone up on the market.

The price of a 2 packet of sugar has gone up from Kshs. 70 to over Kshs 160 in most shops in Western shops.

Wanjala, Mukhwana and Mwombe want millers to pay over Kshs. 4,000 per tone of cane delivery.

Torture still rampant in police force —report

By LUKEKAPCHANGA

TORTURE is widespread in Kenya, and it remains a persistent phenomenon, with regular police officers being branded as leading perpetrators.

A report by Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU), dubbed "Up scaling Torture Prevention and Response in Kenya", released on 29th July notes that non-conventional torture methods, such as forced disappearance, blackmail and extortions are now common characteristics in police cells.

The National Torture Prevalence Survey Report 2011, says that there are consistent allegations of ongoing extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances by law enforcement personnel. It regrets that very little has changed, despite recommendations addressing torture made by various actors including Governance, Justice, Law and Order Sector (GJLOS), Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (CIPEV), and Alston reports.

Approximately one out of four Kenyans has been a victim of torture and majority in the hands of the police while others in the hands of vigilante groups who operate under the protection of the police.

The key drivers of torture were found to be many, but with exceptional responsibility falling on the executive for being the main culprit due to its acts or omission.

"It appears that the executive condones torture of all forms, by keeping silent whenever incidences of torture are highlighted by the media and other forums," the report reads in part.

There was widespread agreement among respondents that active participation by the executive in condemning

and punishing perpetrators holds potential in stemming torture.

There is a practice by law enforcers to conclude cases quickly and secure a conviction by taking shortcut, avoiding due investigations process as well as the culture of impunity where perpetrators are shielded from punishment, despite their wrong actions.

There exists a legislative gap in the prosecution of perpetrators of torture which has been exploited as torture itself has not been defined in the Penal Code, as such there is no legal framework to enforce freedom from torture.

The report, which was presented by Peter Kiama, the executive director of IMLU, at Hilton Hotel acknowledges impediments in the fight against torture. Few victims of torture, in the first place report to the authorities or seek redress as majority do not trust the institutions of justice.

"Complaints are never acted upon reporting or inaction for fear of reprisals by the perpetrators due to impunity," the reports states.

There exists lack of awareness by those interviewed, about personal rights and safeguards provided by law and the constitution against violence.

The report, notes that although police admitted being identified as villains of torture, and while not refuting that torture really takes place within their places of work, they say it is not officially sanctioned.

They categorically maintain, that torture of whatever form cannot be officially sanctioned and any officer within their ranks, found to have committed the offence, the only option is to be sacked.

Police also are of the view that members of the public be made aware

of their rights, for them to take necessary action when they fall victims of torture. The constitutional requirement that all arrested persons be produced in court within 24 hours, seem to pose a challenge to the police.

"The law enforcers claim lack of infrastructure to facilitate investigations within 24 hours, and in some cases, the geographical coverage is vast and wide forcing some stations not being able to get suspects in court within that time," the reports notes further.

This will impact on the role of police service in ensuring access to justice for victims of criminal activities.

The police also identified the need to match constitutional provisions on Bill of rights with intensive training of police officers to ensure competence and proper supervision.

The reports, recommends that the government respects its obligations under the International Human rights instruments it has ratified amongst them, Convention Against Torture.

It recommended that security forces comply with local and International law on conducting searches, arrests and treatment of detainees.

Further, the report expressed the need to open investigations into the conduct of police and intelligence officials, who knowingly collaborated with criminal gangs in arrests and torture of people.

There is also need to have in place a legal framework which prohibits torture, effectively implemented and have mechanisms to monitor.

The executive needs to collaborate with other arms of government in adopting comprehensive reforms in the justice system for integrity, efficiency and transparency.

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Hi-tech city set for Konza

By PETER MUTUKU

PLANS are underway to set up an ultra modern technology city in Konza area of Machakos District.

The project, which is expected to cost Kshs 630 billion, is part of Vision 2030 flagship projects set to be rolled out in different parts of the country.

The City has been earmarked as an important entry into Kenya's technology sector for investors upon completion in the next five years.

According to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Communications Dr Bitange Ndemo, Konza will be developed with facilities to support Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) ventures and will also have a science park, a convention centre, shopping mall, hotels, international schools, health and sporting facilities.

He says that the government will give priority to local investors to fund the Kshs630 billion Konza Technology City which will help realize the Vision 2030 socio-economic development blueprint.

Dr Ndemo says that although several international agencies have expressed interest in the project, the government wants local financial institutions to fund the technology city.

The PS adds that foreign investors will only be invited if local financiers do not raise the entire Kshs 630 billion for the construction of the 5,000 acre city.

He said construction will be done in phases due to the huge finance that is involved.

"We are looking at doing



An impression of the Konza Technopolis Park in Malili, Machakos. Plans are underway to set up an ultra modern technology city.

this project in five phases, with the ground breaking ceremony slated for next month by President Mwai Kibaki. "Phase one will cost \$3 billion and involves construction of the science park, business processing and outsourcing centre, international finance centre, tourism facilities and the research centre," Dr Ndemo said. "We want to move away from what happened with the EPZ (Export Processing Zones) where people bought land and speculated on it."

The Ministry of Water is already working with that of Information and Communications to ensure the technology city is

supplied with an adequate sanitation system including water works.

When complete, the new Technology City is estimated to need 100 cubic meters of water daily.

"We have identified a dam known as Thuage, which will provide water to Konza. It will also provide water for irrigation for the neighbouring communities and will also produce hydro-electric power," said Water PS David Stower.

He said his Ministry is currently in talks with power generator, Ken Gen for the electricity project.

The Koza Technology City

is an idea that was put together by an international team of experts based on best practice from the UK, China and Brazil.

The City is designed to feature world class civic and commercial architecture.

During the meeting, local investors raised concern about the current inflation and weak shilling that they argued could erode their investment.

However, the government assured them that several financing options will be availed.

"We have begun to negotiate with the Ministry of Transport for a high speed rail link. We recently visited Syokimau and were assured that the rail

from Syokimau will be linked to Konza, JKIA and the CBD," said Dr Ndemo.

The PS said several international companies have expressed interest in the project.

China to help Shiamberere institute

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE Chinese government has pledged to donate state of the art equipment worth Kshs.389 million to the Shiamberere Technical Training Institute, in Kakamega North district.

The facilities will transform the workshop into one of its kind in the East and Central Africa region.

The Government through the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) has disbursed Kshs.42 million for the construction of a complex to house electrical, mechanical and Information Communication Technology (ICT) workshops. The Chief Principal, Mrs. Bernadette Kanute, says the construction is likely to be complete in two months.

She said the Chinese government had confirmed that the equipment would be in the country by October this year.

The Principal said the Government was ready to expand the institute, but the neighbouring community was not willing to provide land.

Mrs. Kanute said the college has only 254 students against a required 1,000 by the Ministry of Higher Education.

She attributed the poor figure to cheap politics involving leaders who have been discouraging parents from taking children to the institute because of their opposition to its expansion.

Will clustering be the magic for Kenya's economy?

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

KENYA'S economy may deliver double digit growth as envisaged in Vision 2030 following the introduction of clustering as one of the ways of enhancing national competitiveness and productivity.

A cluster is a population of geographically concentrated and mutually-related business units, associations and public/private organizations centered around a distinctive economic specialization.

The Government has adopted the Cluster Strategy to improve the country's competitiveness and help actualize the goal of rapid industrialization by 2030. The cluster initiative can help improve productivity and competitiveness by applying the Triple Helix collaboration which is a formal framework that brings

together government, business firms, research organizations and academic institutions to enhance growth and competitiveness.

The Port of Mombasa which has been identified by the National Economic and Social Council (NEC) to be among 12 priority clusters for the initial implementation of the cluster strategy will be an excellent flagship project. Forming a maritime cluster will certainly help eradicate some of the challenges that the port is currently facing. The main issues at the basis of the establishment of a maritime cluster organization are to increase competitiveness, to promote maritime sectors, and to improve coordination within the cluster.

Mombasa is the largest port in East and Central Africa. The port serves Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi and is the eastern gateway of the Democratic Republic

of Congo. The port is equipped to handle a wide range of cargos to key destinations around the world. The major markets being Europe, Asia, Far East, America and the rest of Africa. The port continues to struggle with heavy through-put traffic which has been on the increase. Congestion is also a big hindrance to the port's efficiency which has impacted the international trade negatively.

The Singapore maritime industry has been quick to capitalize on her strategic position by adopting the cluster strategy. The cluster comprises more than 5,000 maritime establishments and provides employment to over 96,000 people. Recent statistics show that total vessel arrivals in terms of shipping tonnage stood at 1.4 billion gross tones and container through-put of 27.9 million, which makes it

the world's busiest port. Singapore has also seen a growth in the number of major shipping companies establishing operating bases there. The port of Durban, the largest in Africa has transport taking 48 per cent share of firms in the port cluster and logistics firms being 28 per cent. This is all aimed at promoting efficiency of activities that take place at the port and attaining economics of scale.

The cluster region generally includes the primary port area, the business district of the port city, secondary nodes in the proximity of the primary seaport and municipalities proximal to the port that control the port service activities. The population of the maritime cluster may include, cargo handling, transport e.g. road transport firms; logistics, manufacturing which includes ship repair and maintenance.

Busia cane farmers, Mumias in land row

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

A SHOWDOWN looms between sugarcane farmers in Busia Zone and the Mumias Sugar Company.

At the centre of controversy is a 341.2 acre parcel of land which was ostensibly leased by the farmers to the Company for five years to facilitate its operations.

However upon the expiry of the lease period in June this year, the Company has refused to vacate the land and instead wants the farmers to repay a debt of Kshs 11 million owed to them or forfeit the land question.

Now the farmers have vowed not to deliver their cane to the factory un-

til the land in question reverts back to them.

Led by Bukhayo Elders Council chairman, Jonathan Wabala, who is also the chairman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Busia branch, the irate farmers want the government to intervene and revoke the illegal acquisition of their land.

"We are appealing to the government especially the ministry of lands to move with speed and revoke the illegal acquisition of our land by Mumias Sugar Company," they argue.

They also appealed to the Kenya Anti-Corruption Authority [KACA] to carry out investigations at the Busia lands department which they claim

validated the illegal transaction.

"As sugarcane farmers, we are desperately appealing to the Kenya Anti-Corruption Authority (KACA) to investigate the Busia lands department which has played a critical role in validating the illegal acquisition of our land by the Sugar Company," they charge, adding that they will use all means at their disposal to paralyse operations at the Company until the Company yield's into their demands.

At the same time, the former National Taxpayers Association coordinator Kizito Wangalwa leaders in Busia County will follow up the matter to ensure the land is returned to the owners.

Wangalwa appealed to the govern-

ment to intervene as a matter of urgency and help the farmers get back the parcel of land that had been earmarked for the construction of Busia sugar factory.

Meanwhile, Busia sugar farmers want the Prime Minister Raila Odinga to honour his pledge and push for the establishment of Busia sugar factory before 2012. Speaking at the controversial Nasewa sugar cane land in Nambale, the farmers said that they will back the PM's presidential bid if the proposed Busia sugar factory is constructed as promised.

"The PM had promised us that he will push for the establishment of Busia sugar factory before 2012," said the

farmers, adding that he should honour the promise. At the same time, Lambert Ogochi who is a director of the Busia Outgrowers Company (BOCO) has accused some of his colleagues of colluding with Mumias Sugar Company to acquire the controversial land at Nasewa. "It is unfortunate that some of my colleagues are colluding with the Mumias sugar board managing director Dr Evans Kidero to dispossess farmers of their land," said Ogochi.

Ogochi called for their resignation saying the committee has failed to serve the interest of the farmers who had elected them and instead opted to engage in dubious deals in a bid to enrich themselves.

Demand driving cane prices upwards

By JOEL JUMA

RIVALRY among sugarcane factories in Kakamega County has gone a notch higher. Butali Sugar Mills in Kakamega North District has increased cane payment per tonnage by another Kshs.200.

Butali which serves over 30,000 farmers is now the best paying factory in the County after it increased payment per tonne from Kshs.3,400 to Kshs3,600. The move has displaced Mumias Sugar Company (MSC) from the top position as it is still paying Kshs.3,475 for the same. Butali Sugar Company General Manager Sohail Patel said the company will continue to improve payments to motivate farmers to grow more cane.

"We have increased our payment as the price of sugar in the market has also gone up," said Patel who was speaking to the press at the firm's offices in Kakamega North district.

Cane shortage has largely contributed to the increment in payments. Most factories are now harvesting premature cane. West Kenya Sugar Company risks closing down as its crushing capacity has already been reduced from 3,500 tonne per a day to less than 1,000. The move comes at a time when shops are faced with a shortage of sugar. The shortage has hit several trading centres with super markets in Kakamega, Mumias and Busia stopping customers from purchasing more than two kilogrammes of the commodity. Cabinet Minister Soita Shitanda said he was happy that competition is becoming beneficial to farmers.

The Housing Minister explained that Butali has made farmers happier as it is paying the growers as per the market rates. Shitanda demanded that the Minister for Agriculture Sally Kosgey convenes a meeting for the newly elected Directors at the Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) to help look into ways of saving West Kenya. A Nairobi based businessman George Munji said the competition should not result in the collapse of West Kenya. Munji said the Ministry of Agriculture and the Kenya Sugar Board should carry out intensive education programmes aimed at urging farmers in Trans Nzoia and Nandi Counties to plant cane.

Mumias Sugar Cane Farmers Association Chairman Simon Wesechere said the board should compel all factories to pay more than Kshs10, 000 per tone for premature harvested cane.

Wesechere said Mumias Sugar Company should lead the way as it is the largest factory in the country.

Plan to uproot old tree crops mooted in Coast



Macadamias trees in Taita Taveta County.

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

EFFORTS to transform Coast Province into an agricultural zone has been hampered by old trees of key cash crops.

The Provincial Director of Agriculture (PDA), Mrs. Phoebe Odhiambo, however says that the Ministry of Agriculture has embarked on an elaborate exercise to phase out all old trees of cashew nuts, macadamia, and coconuts,

and replace them with young, grafted and high yielding seedlings for purposes of achieving Vision 2030.

The official who was addressing the executive committee of Wakulima wa Macadamia Taita Taveta Association (WAMATTA) in Wundanyi said that a coconut census has already been undertaken and efforts to replace the old trees are underway.

"While the global price of

macadamia, cotton, cashew nuts, and coconut was increasing, their production was quite low due to poor crop husbandry," she said.

The PDA has also asked buyers of the cash crops in the region to partner with farmers in seeds bulking or purchase for them certified seeds, as one way of assisting them achieve their targets.

The WAMATTA chairman, Mzee Baldwin Mwangoji, said the expansion of the crop produc-

tion has been hampered by lack of adequate certified seeds with most farmers being handicapped in their bid to economically support seeds bulking.

He said they could either buy bulk seeds locally or purchase from KARI, Thika.

He said the quality and quantity of the crop has improved due to the planning of certified seeds, but production has not attained the 20-tonne threshold to enable the association launch its processing plant. The union plans to increase production per tree through top-working, planting of 300,000 seedlings in the next five years and rehabilitate Kidundu tree nursery as an organic source of seedlings.

On environment, Mr. Mwangoji says climate change could be best addressed through planting of macadamia trees which mature and cover the ground faster than normal exotic trees. Top-working provides better and leafier tree cover as well as a huge carbon sink.

The PDA asked farmers to target the 300 metric tonne production this year if they hope to tap into the high global demand of the crop. She said the crop would act as a reliable source of income for farmers and uplift their living standards. Taita District Agriculture Officer, Mrs. Margaret Jefwa, said since farmers launched the operations, they had reduced brokers by identifying direct buyers.

Acute cane shortage threatening Kakamega mills

By JOEL JUMA

KENYA Sugar Board (KSB) has indicated it will not intervene following the current cane shortage facing two sugar mills in Kakamega County.

The board, which acts as the regulator is yet to be constituted almost two months after farmers elected new directors. KSB Chief Executive Officer Solomon Odera said that the current cane shortage being experienced by the Butali Sugar Mills and rival West Kenya Sugar Company cannot be addressed by the board.

Mr. Odera noted that there is nothing they could do even as media reports indicate that West Kenya risked closing due to lack of enough cane.

"There is nothing we can do at the moment since the board is not in operation. Once the board is constituted, we

can then sit down and deliberate on the way forward," said Odera. He spoke as West Kenya stated that the firm could shut down in two months due to the biting cane shortage.

The crisis has now seen, both West Kenya and Butali harvesting immature cane aged between 9-12 months. West Kenya's crushing capacity has reduced from 3,500 tonnes per day to less than a 1,000 tonnes. The sugar crisis has boiled down to the consumers with many wholesale and retail shops lacking the commodity.

Few supermarkets in the region selling the commodity have limited their customers to only two kilos per buyer.

Odera noted that the situation in West Kenya sugar zone is complicated, adding that the two millers will have to wait longer for the new board to give direction.

A director Billy Wanjala said the Ministry of Agriculture is to blame for the crisis as it has been frustrating the board's cane development activities.

He noted that all plans by the board have to be approved by the ministry before they are implemented.

Wanjala said there was need to get down to the root cause of the cane shortage adding that the solution lay in both companies embarking on serious cane development. He said the two firms should expand their fields for cane to parts of Uasin-Gishu and Lugari districts. The current cane shortage crisis at West Kenya is likely to worsen the soaring prices of processed sugar in the country.

Neighbouring Nzoia Sugar Company, which is the third largest producer after Mumias and West Kenya is set to shut down for four weeks starting next month for maintenance.

Kenya finally publishes biosafety regulations

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE Kenya government Friday 12, 2011 published the much awaited biosafety guidelines needed to put the country firmly on the road to commercialization of genetically modified organism.

The guidelines control how to import, export and transit such materials in Kenya. The biosafety regulations 2011 after a long wait and protracted debate over importation of transgenic maize for relief purposes.

Sugar farmers demand rise in cane price

By JOEL JUMA

CANE farmers from Kakamega County want Government to compel sugar millers to pay them Kshs 10,000 per tonne of cane delivered to the factories.

The farmers drawn from Mumias, West Kenya and Busia said adjustment of the price upwards will act as compensation as millers are harvesting premature cane.

Most factories in Western Kenya are now crushing cane aged between 14 and 16 months instead of the normal 22 to 26 months.

The Kenya Sugar Board Directors Billy Wanjala and Mohamed Mukhwana have also raised a red flag over cane shortage in Western region.

The farmers said cane prices should be raised from the current prices, which range from between Kshs 3,313 and Kshs 3,475 as millers are getting profits resulting from other products, which include electricity, molasses and ethanol.

Mumias Sugar Company, which produces electricity, has this month increased cane price to Kshs 3,475 per tonne. Butali Sugar Mills is paying Kshs 3,400 for the same while West Kenya is paying Kshs 3,213 per tonne.

The farmers, led by the Mumias Sugar Cane Farmers Association Chairman Simon Wesechere, the farmers said the Minister for Agriculture Dr Sally Kosgey should convene a Kenya Sugar Board meeting to allow the newly-elected directors deliberate on the matter.

He explained that the current inflation is hurting farmers, who should be allowed to benefit from sugarcane by-products.

Wesechere said lack of a Sugar Cane Pricing Committee prevents millers from reaching agreements on cane prices with farmers representatives.

Battle for access to cane continues in Kakamega

By JOEL JUMA

RIVALRY between West Kenya and Butali Sugar companies in Kakamega County intensified after the two milling firms increased payment of cane to farmers by between Kshs 100 and Kshs 200 per tonne.

The move is aimed at attracting farmers to deliver cane to each of the factory after it emerged that cane shortage was looming in the area. Butali Sugar Company is now paying Kshs 3,400 per tonne of cane delivered to the factory from Kshs 3,200, making it the highest paying factory in Western province.

Butali Sugar Company General Manager Sohil Patel said the move is aimed at ensuring that the over 20,000 farmers contracted to the firm earn better returns from their raw material.

Sohil explained that the company was now having a crushing capacity of 1,000 tonnes of cane compared to the initial 500 tonnes. The Butali Out Growers Company Chairman William Kopi explained that farmers delivering their cane to Butali were being paid on weekly basis as step towards making them invest in other development projects faster.

The Kenya Sugar Board Western Regional Manager Laban Mulehi explained that both Butali and West Kenya were free to pay farmers prices of their choice as the board has not set the maximum for the cane delivery.

"We only reject low payments especially anything below Kshs 1,800," said Mulehi who was speaking to the press in his Kakamega office. He explained that the cane pricing committee was allowing millers and farmers to alternate the pricing formulae so long as there are no disputes.



Cane cutters at work in a sugar farm.

Mulehi explained that West Kenya was now paying Kshs 3,352 per tonne from Kshs 3,213. He said that farmers in the two zones should agree on where to deliver their cane without disputes.

And campaigns for the board elections intensified further after MPs and farmers from Mumias sugar belt said the chairman of the board should hail from the area. Mumias MP Ben Washiali and his Lurambi counterpart Manyala Keya said one of the directors from mumias sugar belt should be given the slot of chairmanship.

Washiali and Keya said Billy Wanjala should be given the slot as he received the highest number of votes from farmers in the area. Wanjala got over 3,500 votes during the recently held elections.

Wanjala said he was ready to take up the chance saying that he has adequate experience to ensure that the sugar industry contributes to the growth of the country's economy. He said having served as the chairman of the Sugar Development Levy Board, he was able to perform as the board chairman.

Wanjala said matters that relate to importation of cheap sugar will be addressed when he is elected to the post. He explained that reviewing the sugar Act to have farmers exempted from paying transport costs will also be addressed.

He explained that millers were not deducting transport costs from farmers and wondered why the white sugar factories were doing the same.

Fish farmers get Kshs.5m cooler

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

FISH farmers from Nyaguta village, Kiogoro Location in Kisii county are set to benefit from a Kshs. 5 million cooler from the government this financial year.

Kisii Central District Fisheries Officer (DFO), Edwin Muga says the machine will cushion them from losses they incur anytime their produce goes bad. The DFO says that the cooler will be placed at a location with the highest fish production in order to be utilized fully.

The DFO who was accompanied by the French Ambassador to Kenya Etienne de Poncins made the remarks at Nyaguta during a visit to Nyaguta Star Self help Group which is engaged in fish farming. Muga urged area farmers to diversify their activities and venture into aquaculture in a bid to alleviate poverty.

Similarly, the DFO revealed that nine metric tons of fish have since been harvested from 10 fish ponds in the area, adding, that they expect to harvest more from the remaining 100 ponds. "I am happy to report that the area has more fish ponds than any other because farmers have realized the importance of rearing the same. We are optimistic that the biting poverty levels will be history if we all embrace fish farming," Muga said. The Ambassador said his government had pumped Kshs 3.8m towards fish farming in the area and encouraged farmers to utilize the money to increase productivity.

The Envoy, who officially opened the project dubbed "Financial assistance to commercial Aquaculture Producer of Africa for the Development of aquaculture in Kisumu region", pointed out that the region and particularly Kisii provided the waters used in aquaculture in Kenya.

He noted that commercial aquaculture in Kenya is faced with myriad of challenges ranging from access to fish food, fingerlings to financial technical management. Poncins said the project being implemented by the French government was geared towards addressing the problems faced in aquaculture in order to come up with lasting solutions and sustainable aquaculture frameworks in the region.

He asserted the project made more sense because Lake Victoria had been subjected to environmental issues with the problems of sea weed that invaded the lake hindering fishermen from carrying out their activities.

IFAD funds rabbit slaughter-house in Mukurwe-ini

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

INTERNATIONAL Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has set up a Kshs.1.1 million slaughterhouse in Mukurwe-ini district.

The slaughterhouse which was established at Ngamwa shopping centre is now ready for use by the community.

Area MP who is also the Youths and Sports assistant Minister Hon Kabando wa Kabando said the project is a big boost to rabbit rearing farmers in the area and will help expand market both inside and outside the district.

Mukurwe-ini district has currently over 5,500 rabbits mostly California White, New Zealand and Flemish Giant breeds which are spread across the district and mostly reared by groups and several individual farmers.

"The abattoir will expand the market of the rabbits and farmers will take advantage of the new road network of Mukurwe-ini Gakonya road which is almost complete to serve the whole of Mukurwe-ini and its environs," he said.



The Kshs 1.1 million rabbit abattoir at Ngamwa Shopping centre in Mukurwe-ini district.
photo/Joseph Mukubwa

The farmers have also embarked in goat rearing of the German Al-

pine dairy goat's projects.

Both projects will eradicate

poverty in the area and boost income for the farmers.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

Mukurwe-ini farmers turn to pineapple farming

FARMERS in Mukurwe-ini district are increasingly turning into pineapple growing business in a bid to diversify in crop production.

The farmers say that pineapples are bringing good returns compared to traditional crops such as coffee.

Gathanje Pineapple Growers group which was started two years ago aims at enhancing food production and reducing poverty.

This is the first group to grow pineapples in the Nyeri County.

The group which comprises of 23 members has been able to sell pineapples valued at Kshs 200,000 which is impressive in the semi arid Ngamwa area of lower Mukurwe-ini district.

“We cannot compare pineapple with other crops since their production does not require much labour or chemicals and the market is readily available,” said the chairman Lawrence Kamau.

Kamau says that the pineapples are very sweet compared to the pineapples grown in Thika area near Nairobi. The group started in year 2005 and planted 9,000 plants. The group has since harvested for two seasons.

They later planted 10,000 other plants in their one and quarter acre farm which they have leased from one of the farmers in the area.

“The group members also grow the pineapples in their own farms; currently they have over 300 plants each,” says Mr Edward Wakahiu who is the secretary of the group.



Gathanje Pineapple Growers group shows their harvest of pineapples recently. Inset: Some of the pineapples in the farm. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

The pineapples are sold locally and at Tharaa market. IFAD helped the group to purchase a water tank which provides water for drip irrigation, as well as farm inputs.

The group’s vision is to eradicate poverty in the area and boost food production. Indeed, their pineapples won in the 2010 Central Kenya ASK Show at Kabiru-ini,” says Assistant Minister Kabando wa Kabando who is also the area MP.

This is part of Central Kenya Dry-Areas support program, some of whose projects have also benefited from Mukurwe-ini CDF 2008-2010, especially three major Irrigation projects.

President of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Mr Kanayo Nwanze visited the farm few months ago and was surprised by the good work the farmers are doing. The Ministry of Agriculture has been supporting the project in training and extension services.

Maize output drops sharply in western

By JOEL JUMA

MAIZE production in Western province is set for a record drop of over 300,000 bags during this year’s harvest.

Projected harvests currently stand at 4.5 million bags of maize which is slightly less than the 4.8 million bags harvested last year.

The Ministry of Agriculture attributed the decline in production to poor rainfall patterns and drought that hit parts of the region.

Western Provincial Director of Agriculture John Cheruyiot said that many farmers also used poor quality seeds and did not apply adequate fertiliser. “The land under crops has also gone down due to the growth in population. Cases of land fragmentation are on the rise,” said Cheruyiot. He explained that some farmers could not access fertiliser for top dressing.

He further pointed out that cane farming affected production of maize following the entry of Butali Sugar Mills and expansion of West Kenya Sugar Company. Butali has attracted over 30,000 farmers who have reduced land under maize to engage in cane farming. West Kenya Sugar Company has also expanded to cover parts of Trans Nzoia to beat a biting cane shortage in the area.

Cheruyiot noted that the National Cereals and Produce Board depots in the region will record a shortage of grains. “The board has not started buying but the stores in Kakamega and Malava are not well stocked,” said Cheruyiot who was speaking in Kakamega town. The Kakamega North DC Gideon Ombongi warned farmers against harvesting green maize for sale.

Ombongi said farmers with green maize should be cautious of middlemen out to exploit them. He told farmers not rush to sell their maize cheaply as the board will purchase the commodity at a Government rate.

State urged to privatize public sugar firms

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE newly re-elected Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) directors from Mumias and Busia sugar cane growing zones have asked the Government to privatize cane milling factories instead of auctioning them.

Mr. Billy Wanjala, the former Sugar Development Fund board chairman and Mohamed Mukhwana, said privatization will enable potential buyers to dispel the fear of Government influence in plans to revive the companies.

Some of the firms lined up for auction include Nzoia Sugar Company in Bungoma County, Chemelil and Muhoroni Sugar Companies in Kisumu County.

“The slow pace at which the government is working out the auctioning of the firms is raising questions,” said Mukhwana.

Mr. Wanjala said focus must be directed at the sale of companies and not pushing for the re-extension of Comesa safeguards. He said the expiry of Comesa safeguards next year will have little effect on the sector unlike the looming shortage of sug-

arcane which has forced millers to break early for maintenance.

The duo claimed the Government was meddling with KSB operations, leading to a paralysis of activities.

Mr. Mukhwana claimed the recent concluded elections cost the board about Kshs.20 million because there were excess Government officers involved who demanded exorbitant allowances.

He has asked the Government to give the board a free hand in decision making and implementation of development plans.

“We must have a free hand as the board to function effectively unlike in the past where influential individuals in the Government colluded with KSB management and made it difficult for the 13 members of the board to execute its mandate,” said Mr. Mukhwana.

The board failed to release Kshs.500 million to cane growers for crop development even after it transferred the lending service to the farmer from the Agriculture Finance Corporation (AFC) to Equity Bank. The directors spoke to The Link in Mumias town recently.



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Luhya in Maseno are marginalized — TJRC told

By **NYAKWAR ODAWO**

THE Luhya community around Maseno in Emuhaya district has called for a clear demarcation of the boundary between the Kisumu and Vihiga counties to forestall clashes between the two communities.

The community members led by John Okila and Dan Mitira told the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) in Busia recently that the provincial boundary between Western and Nyanza Provinces especially through Maseno Township is unclear.

They claimed that the boundary has been manipulated in many instances to serve the interests of the political wing.

“Local politicians have in the past conspired against the will of the people to retain Maseno township in Nyanza instead of sticking to existing boundary lines at the time of independence which run through Kiboswa market, Nyahera dispensary, Daraja Mbili, Hopati, Magwar, Otwenya, Ramula, Mundano to the West,” explained Okila.

He said the boundary line now runs along Maseno University, Maseno Farmers Training Centre, Maseno School and Maseno Hospital purposely to retain Maseno township in Nyanza province.

The community members recalled that the then Gem, Seme, Kisumu Abaluhya Union and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) had in 1962 petitioned the regional boundaries commission to secure Luhya land and its people who had been left in Nyanza province back to Western province in accordance with the

Lancaster House constitutional arrangement.

However, the boundary commission failed to designate sub-locations dominated by the Luhya community into Western province as had been stipulated in the rules and regulations of 1962 Regional boundaries commission.

“The community now feels that failure by the government and successive commissions to resolve the thorny issue had totally separated us from our brothers and sisters on the Nyanza side. This in

essence has led to the marginalization of the community in terms of development, cultural practices including distortion of names and an identity crisis,” they said, adding that the community has been consigned to the rocky infertile areas of Maragoli and Mabungo hills.

The community members further accused Maseno University of denying them access to natural resources and cited incidents where villagers have been beaten senseless by security personnel after being found cutting grass at the

disputed boundary line within the precincts of the university.

“There exists bad blood between the Luhya community and the university administration because anytime our people are found cutting grass at the institution, they are arrested and charged in court,” they said.

They appealed to TJRC to liaise with the Lands Ministry to ensure the disputed boundary between Nyanza and Western provinces along Maseno is aligned to reflect provisions as at 1963.



Mr. Dan Mitira (second left) presenting the case of the Luhya community to the commissioners in Busia. Photo/Nyakwar Odawo

Board in bid to curb food wastage

By **BOB OMBATI**

THE National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPD) has launched a countrywide food storage sensitization campaign to curb post harvest wastage which partly contributed to the current hunger.

NCPB director, Prof. Gideon Misoi says the country harvests approximately 40 million bags annually where 70 per cent is consumed while the remaining goes to waste due to poor storage techniques. Misoi, who spoke to farmers in Kisii intimated that due to poor storage facilities, the country reserve levels remain low and therefore cannot sustain people for longer periods in situations of draught.

“It is unfortunate to see people dying from starvation mainly due to the prolonged period of draught, when this actually has the capacity to feed its own population if proper measures are in place to manage glut,” he adds.

He however says that the scenario is likely to change once farmers embrace a warehouse storing system where grains will be stored in certified stores at affordable rates.

The NCPD boss says that through the programme, farmers will also be able to access credits from commercial banks once they produce the warehouse receipts as securities.

Misoi points out that the board, jointly with the government will also increase food in its strategic reserves from the current 3million bags to 8 million bags in the next two years to ensure food security.

He says the Board and the government will make sure farmers access subsidized farm inputs to cushion them from increased fertilizer prices.

The Director revealed that the Board intends to visit all food production areas to sensitize farmers on the new initiative, adding, there are 2.2 million bags of food in NCPB stores, part of which is being transported to famine hit areas in the country to save lives.

Leaders want finance bill in favor of devolution

By **LINK CORRESPONDENT**

LEADERS from Kakamega County want the proposed Financial Management Bill drawn in favour Counties so that more resources are allocated to spearhead development at the regional level.

Political and religious leaders from the area also urged Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta and his Local Government counterpart Musalia Mudavadi to agree on a Bill that will not allocate more resources to the National Government.

Led by Bishop Titus Khamala and Mumias MP Ben Washiali, the leaders explained that the County Government require more funds from the Treasury during the next Financial budget to enable them put up structures and should not be starved funds.

The leaders who were speaking separately said the differences between ODM and PNU should not be dragged into the formulation of the Financial Bill.

“Uhuru and Mudavadi should agree over the sharing of resources as most of the Counties will require money to put up County Assemblies

and put up other structures,” said Khamala.

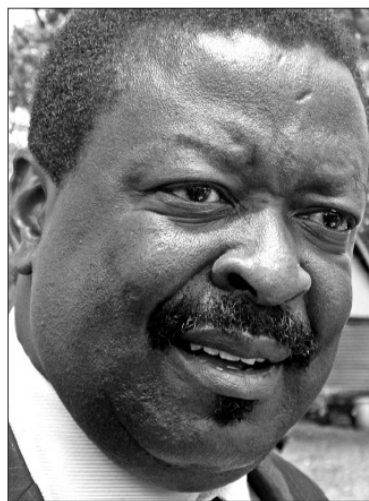
Khamala said the cabinet need to move fast and approve other bills required for implementation of the new constitution instead of blaming Attorney General Amos Wako who is preparing to leave the State Law Office.

“We don’t need to blame somebody who is on his way out and the minister for Constitutional Affairs Mutula Kilonzo need to take responsibility over delayed Bills,” said Khamala.

Khamala made the remarks during the burial of Ken Were at Butso Central Location in Lurambi division while Washiali made the remarks in Mumias town.

Uhuru and Mudavadi were reported to have disagreed over allocation of resources between the Counties and the Central Government after it emerged that Treasury had drafted a parallel Bill over sharing of resources.

Mudavadi was reported to have said that the task force on Devolution Chaired by Moi University Law Lecturer Mutakha Kangu outlined all the requirements of resources for both the Central and County Government.



Mr. Mudavadi



Mr. Uhuru

Mudavadi said recommendations by the task force need to be implemented without alterations from Treasury during the formulation of the Bill. Washiali explained that the next General Elections will be heavy and more resources need to be allocated to County Governments for them to implement functions outlined in the new constitution.

Khamala added that the education sector require reforms by ensuring that the elevation of schools does not exclude some of the mixed secondary schools.

He said that funds being used to elevate national schools should also go towards the hiring of nursery teachers to help strengthen the education foundation of children in the country.

ACK cautions MPs against enacting weak laws

By **JOEL JUMA**

THE Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) has urged Parliament not to pass weak legislations that will compromise gains espoused in the new constitution.

The Church explained that Kenyans passed the constitution to bring about change in Governance systems adding that the Speaker of the National Assembly Kenneth Marende must guide the house as per the requirement of the new laws.

“Let us use referendum to execute any changes in the constitution instead of turning the cabinet and parliament into houses of raping the rights of Kenyans,” said Bishop Ben Salala of the Mumias Diocese of ACK.

Salala explained that the slots set aside for either gender should remain intact without being changed by the cabinet and Parliament.

Salala and Bishop Titus Khamala of Cornerstone ministries said that President Kibaki and Prime Minister

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Mwingi residents demand reduction of water prices

By KAVYU-KURA

RESIDENTS of Mwingi town are demanding immediate reduction of water tariffs by the Kiambere-Mwingi water and sanitation company (KMWASCO).

The residents say that the fixed charge rates have been revised upwards from Kshs 290 to Kshs 620 despite the unreliable water supply.

Led by the chief executive officer of the Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRCE) Peter Mutemi, the residents protested at the arbitrary increase of water tariffs, incessant disruptions of the water supply and in other cases complete lack of water supply.

In their memorandum presented to area DC Peter Kinuthia, they called for the immediate transfer of the manager and the prosecution of personnel at the company over the alleged embezzlement of funds. They also demanded the adoption of measures to weed out all forms of corruption among the employees of KMWASCO and the assurance to all water consumers of regular, timely and adequate water supply among other demands.

The residents who had staged demonstrations within the town gave KMWASCO a 14-day ultimatum to meet their demands, failure to which "we shall advance our demands to other authorities."

The DC who addressed them at his boardroom admitted water supply system in Mwingi was in crisis as he was also a victim of the severe water shortage.

The DC however noted that although the residents of Mwingi had a democratic right to protest when they were denied crucial service, they should endeavor to raise their grievances with the authorities

before resorting to demonstrations and street protests.

Present at the meeting were KMWASCO Managing Director Paul Kinuba and Mwingi CID boss Lutta Namatsi.



The protestors carrying placards and empty water cans on bikes. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Bungoma residents to vet leaders

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

RESIDENTS of Bungoma County now have a chance to vet people who are aspiring for local leadership positions.

A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) has started public forums in Bungoma County geared towards equipping residents with civic knowledge ahead of the next general elections.

Rehema Kenya Enterprise Development Organization (RKEDO) is providing the forums where residents are provided with an opportunity to vet people aspiring for elective positions in the county.

During the public meetings, those aspiring to be elected as County representatives, Members of Parliament (MPs), Senators and Governors are given a chance to explain their beliefs and say what they will do if they win the election.

The residents are also given the chance to scrutinize their manifestos to gauge their practical capacity to implement what they say.

RKEDO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr. Sammy Naibei Chemwey, points out that during the public meetings participants are not allowed to use derogatory language.

"During the public meetings anybody who insults other people whether they are present or not will be denied the chance to speak or sell his/her ideas," Mr. Chemwey asserts.

Mr. Chemwey says that KREDO, through the project, Accountable Leadership through Public Participation in Bungoma County, is busy organizing public meetings in the current six (6) constituencies of Bungoma County.

Mr. Chemwey adds that this is a pilot project being implemented in Mt. Elgon, Kimilili, Webuye, Sirisia, Kanduyi and Bumula Constituencies courtesy of US-AID.

Mr. Chemwey was speaking recently at Posta ground in Bungoma town, in Kanduyi constituency during the first public meeting in the area.

During the public meeting several aspirants for county representatives seats, parliamentary seats, senators and Governors turned up to sell their manifestos to the residents.

Conspicuous absentees were former and present civic leaders and members of parliament.

Bungoma County under the new constitution dispensation will have 45 elected county representatives, one elected senator, one elected Governor and one elected woman representative.

Jostling for the positions is slowly gathering momentum as more people are developing appetite for the seats every passing day.

By PETER MUTUKU

Kambas told to plant trees to attract rain

RESIDENTS of Ukambani have been challenged to embrace massive reforestation programmes to help increase rainfall in the drought-stricken area.

Patrick Mung'ala who is a leading conservationist in the country says that residents must intensify their efforts in agro forestry to boost on the forest cover.

Mr. Mung'ala who was recently awarded the Moran of Burning Spear (MBS) by President Kibaki for his commitment in environmental protection, says farmers in Ukambani had ignored agro forestry which is becoming the norm in other areas.

"In Central Province, individual farmers have adopted agro forestry and are planting trees alongside other crops in their farms in order to improve on the rainfall and weather conditions in line with the policy spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture," he adds.

Apart from protecting nature, Agro forestry serves as an investment opportunity where farmers can exploit mature tree varieties for sale as timber.

"The practice is also common in Kisii region where residents take it as a commercial enterprise in addition to improving the environment," he said in an analysis of how forests shape rainfall patterns.

"Tree planting in this and other regions prone to recurrent drought should be made compulsory, he said in reference to North Eastern Province, Turkana, East Pokot and parts of Coast Province where food insecurity is the order of the day. Poor food harvest is linked to scarcity of rainfall which Mr Mung'ala blames on lack of substantial forest cover.

He said natural forest blocks such

as Mau Complex, Embobut, Chemosusu, Nandi South and North Rift Valley, Aberdares and Mt Kenya in Central Province, Mt Elgon and Kakamega in Western Province attract reliable rainfall patterns.

"Rainfall patterns are shaped by existence of forests and I urge the Government to start tree plantations and make it compulsory for communities residing in marginal zones to embark on serious tree planting through agro forestry policy as part of a long term solution to drought and famine," he said.

He said all public institutions in Ukambani, including schools, health facilities, churches and market centres should be forced to plant and nurture at least 200 to 500 species as part of a wider campaign to promote afforestation.

"Using the Provincial Administra-

tion, the Government should enforce the policy to all homesteads," he said.

He proposed for the establishment of man made forest blocks in three counties of Machakos, Makueni and Kitui for a wider environmental impact.

He cited other cases where the initiative has succeeded, including Johannesburg forest in South Africa which hosts over 10 million trees and is the largest worldwide.

He said the acreage of China's man-made forests has exceeded 46 million hectares, ranking first worldwide.

He said Bamburi Palm Forest in Mombasa hosts 40 species of palm trees and urged replication of the efforts in Ukambani and other regions for the restoration of the national cover to 12 percent as was the case before independence.

Fear grips SACCO as auditors come calling

By JOEL JUMA

ANXIETY has gripped workers at a cooperative society in Kakamega County after forensic experts were dispatched to the institution to unravel the whereabouts of over Kshs 60 million.

The detectives plan to trace the money in question after auditors from the ministry of Cooperative Development pointed to massive looting during their inquiry.

The inquiry report by the ministry revealed massive loss of funds at Mumias Sukari Savings and Credit Cooperative Society resulting from lack of records. The detectives landed at the society to trace the money after it emerged that records were still missing, as some of the members who took

loans were at large.

The Ministry of Cooperative said the management of the society resolved to engage the experts after members demanded that the money be recovered from the beneficiaries to avoid collapse of the society.

Mumias District Cooperative Officer Stanlaus Wambani said the move to involve the forensic experts was reached after it emerged that there were no records in the society's registry. He explained that some of the workers who were either retired or retrenched at Mumias Sugar Company (MSC) left the premises without clearing the society loans.

"Some of the loans cannot be recovered as defaulters have already retired and left the company premises,"

said Wambani who was speaking in Mumias town. The experts are on the invitation of the society management after members resolved to involve them. The Society Chairman Isaac Shieunda said that reforms were taking place in the society to ensure that members get better returns from their investments.

The society has already applied to the Sacco Society Regulatory Authority (Sasra) to be given a license to take deposits. Shieunda said the move is aimed at ensuring that the society complies with the standards set by the Government in provision of financial services to the members.

Western Provincial Cooperative Officer Nathan Mukhweso and the Sasra Chief Executive Officer Carilus

Ademba who presided over the AGM that saw Sukari members insist on forensic experts, said they were ready to ensure that societies in the region comply with the required standards.

Wambani said cases of leadership wrangles at Sukari society were over as the management headed by Shieunda was working in harmony with the members.

He said the management was set to implement the recommendations of the inquiry report made by the Government for members to get better dividends this year.

Wambani said that ministry of cooperative was also carrying out inspection on some of the societies that have failed to comply with the new requirements aimed at having them licensed.

Coal mining poised to turn fortunes of Mwingi

By KAVYU-KURA

MWINGI town is poised for remarkable growth once the mining of the vast coal deposits at Mui basin kicks off.

Mwingi Central DC Peter Kinuthia says the exploitation of coal and the ongoing recarpeting of the Mwingi-Kandwia-Tseikuru will give Mwingi town the impetus to grow to a vibrant economic hub as investors swarm the area.

"The business community in Mwingi should prepare for the good times ahead and invest in well-designed housing units to accommodate the many investors who have shown interest in doing business in Mwingi once coal mining takes off," adds the DC.

He notes that already investors from India and China have shown interest in investing in Mwingi adding that a Chinese firm had already bought 100 acres at the outskirts of Mwingi in anticipation of the economic boom.

Kinuthia spoke when he officiated at the launch of the Mwingi Traders' Saving and Credit Cooperative (SACCO) Society. He handed the Sacco's registration certificate to officials led by the chairman Mr. Joel Kithome.

The DC says that traders will now be able to access loans and invest in viable business in anticipation of the impending economic boom in the town.

He notes that SACCOs in the country controlled more capital than Banks due to their vast catchment area



DC Peter Kinuthia hands over the Mwingi Traders SACCO registration license to officials.
Photo/Kavyu-Kura

adding that they have been instrumental in empowering the rural folks economically by advancing loans and other funding to them.

The District cooperative officer Joseph Mutemi laments that poor management had forced many SACCOs to collapse.

"We only have 16 vibrant and active SACCOs throughout the Mwingi region," he says and challenges

managers of the Traders' SACCO to observe financial prudence to keep afloat.

Mutemi notes that the existing SACCOs boast of a share capital of Kshs. 139 million and have so far extended loans to shareholders worth up to Kshs. 64 million. He reveals that efforts were being made to revive the dormant and inactive SACCOs to enable members reap benefits.

The chairman of the new Mwingi Traders SACCO Joel Kithome notes that his organization which has 124 registered members did not have an operational secretariat and therefore has been unable to disburse loans to members.

The treasurer Dr. Wathe Nzau says that the society's share capital was awfully low due to the inability by members to pay their contributions.

VP roots for motor cycle plant in his backyard

By KAVYU-KURA

DUE to the high demand of Motor cycles in Mwingi region, an investor has decided to set up an assembling plant in Mwingi town.

Recently Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka announced plans to set up the Motor Cycle assembling plant for the Chinese Skygo model in Mwingi town, to meet the rising demand for the cost effective motor bikes. "I have successfully managed to convince an investor to set up the motor bike assembling line in Mwingi town to help increase access," said the VP who is the MP for Mwingi North.

He said not only will the accessibility of bikes make transport cheap and easy for the locals but also create more job opportunities for the local youth who would start Boda boda businesses to boost personal incomes. Kalonzo who introduced the investor, Stephen Ngei Musyoka of the Makindu Motor Limited to the crowd, added that the setting up of a motor bike assembling was a move towards the industrialization of Mwingi town.

On his part the investor said that by December the Skygo motor bike assembling plant would be up and running because he had already identified a plot of land to set up the factory. Musyoka said the plant is slated to provide direct jobs to at least 60 local youth in Mwingi.

The VP advised local small-scale entrepreneurs including the Boda Boda operators to form savings and cooperative societies to enable them access funds set aside by the government or other financial institutions.

High tension in Tana River of invasion by pastoralists

By BEKADZO TONDO

A MAJOR crisis is looming in Tana River District following the invasion of the semi-arid area by pastoralists from North Eastern Province in search of green pastures and water for their livestock.

The chairlady of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) in Tana River Mrs. Margaret Hiribae says the residents are planning to eject the pastoralists whom they accuse of depleting their resources and forcing them to rely on relief food.

"Most of us now have to scramble for relief food as our farms have been destroyed by livestock owned by the pastoralists," said the chairlady.

The chairlady accused the government of failing to control the influx of pastoral families and their livestock in the area.

Mrs. Hiribae was attending a workshop to discuss peace matters affecting Kilifi and Tana River counties coordinated by Kenya Community support Center (KCSC).

She said that efforts by the locals to complain have not yield any fruits as the pastoralists seem to enjoy protection from the provincial administration.

However, an assistant chief for Golbanti sub location in Ngao loca-

tion Mrs. Salome Morot who was attending the workshop said that the provincial administration was currently holding meetings in the area to avert any crisis.

The Provincial administration at the same time came under sharp criticism with members of the district peace committees accusing them of destabilizing their operations in the area.

The members alleged that they have been sidelined by the Provincial administrators who do not involve them in the formulation of programs that seek to promote peace in the area.

"Members of the district peace committees have been ignored in forums organized by the administrators, and thus are not fully involved in resolving disputes and promoting peaceful coexistence among different communities in our counties," said Mrs. Dorothy Chome, who is a member of peace committee in Kilifi who was attending the workshop.

"As women leaders we fear that worst forms of violence may manifest among different communities in the next general elections if the government fails to involve local communities in resolving some of the emerging problems such as the issue of land ownership," said Mrs. Chome.

Mrs. Chome said long standing land disputes among private devel-

opers and the locals and squatters with the absentee land lords in coast region are some of the things which need to be addressed before the next general elections.

Further, the members expressed fears that the next general elections may turn violent should the government fail to take early measures to address disputes around land and administrative boundaries.

According to the director of KCSE Ms Phyllis Mwema, the workshop brought together women leaders who are also members of different peace committees in Kilifi and Tana River Districts. However most of them alluded to fact that there were no concrete measures in place to avert violence.

Ms Mwema said that women admitted that they have not been directly involved in peace meetings despite being members of the crucial committees. "It is unfortunate for government officials to undermine committees that were formed with their support," said Ms Mwema.

Ms Mwema noted that chiefs, D.Os and D.Cs prepare and submit monthly returns which show how many peace meetings have been held and the number of cases resolved and append signatures of the district committee members whom they did not invite in their meetings.

Is free primary education on sale?

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

MR. JOHN Wafula, a parent at Muji FYM Primary School in Webuye, is bitter that his standard three child was sent away from school for failure to clear a paltry Kshs 2.00 charged as activity fee.

The parent had paid Kshs. 63 and was angry with the teacher for sending away the child to look for the balance at the close of last term.

"This is an act of punishment as the child does not even take part in games and we are not supposed to pay for the activity fee when it has been catered for under the Free Primary Education", he posed.

Wafula complained that despite paying the Kshs.63, for the school activity as demanded by the teachers, parents are never given a breakdown on how the money is spent and the school is not very active in games.

The Education office in Bungoma East District seems to have turned a blind eye on payment of levies in public schools.

It is now common knowledge that besides the Free Primary Education funding channeled to schools, additional levies have been reintroduced despite being outlawed by the government.

At St. Joseph's Primary school, parents claim that a number of levies have been introduced and in some cases there are no receipts issued for accountability purposes.

Mr. Moses Wanyonyi, a parent at the school says he has paid over Kshs.3,000 in levies this year alone and it is now becoming unbearable.

"We are paying more than some private schools because we buy books and pens and cannot understand if FPE is still in existence," complained Wanyonyi.

He said that at the beginning of First term, parents were told to pay Kshs.1,200 to aid in the purchase of a school bus, while new parents paid Kshs.4,000 in addition of 1,000 for interviewing the pupils.

The school also demanded an additional Kshs.700 for school renovations which had not been approved in any meeting, another Kshs.600 for remedial and Kshs.400 for tuition, Kshs.65 for activity, Kshs.50 for computer and in most cases there are no receipts.

He accused the local education office of colluding with the head teachers to defraud parents of their hard earned cash when they are being taxed to support the FPE programme.

But the District Education Officer, Charles Angiela refutes the claims saying all levies being charged by various schools have been approved by respective Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings as required by law.

"Once parents resolve in the PTA Annual General Meetings to contribute money towards a given school activity, the school is only required to inform the education office," he said.

Angiela further said that the education office then analyses the resolutions and forwards them to the district education board for confirmation after which parents are expected to pay the levies without delaying the project.

The education office, he went on is ready and supportive of school based activities initiated by parents that aim at improving performance adding that schools are only allowed to undertake one project per year.

Kibaki backs school feeding program

By PETER MUTUKU

PRESIDENT Mwai Kibaki has reaffirmed government's commitment to supporting the school feeding programme in order to ensure that the education of children in famine-ravaged parts of the country is not compromised.

The President directed relevant ministries to ensure that the Kshs2 billion allocated by the Government to the school feeding programme is utilized prudently to ensure students in areas hard-hit by drought are catered for expeditiously.

The resolve to support the school feeding programme follows a realization that education and learning depend on good nutrition and health.

A research report titled "The Partnership for Child Development" by Dr Joy Miller Del Rosso revealed that nutritional and health status are powerful influences on a child's learning and on how well a child performs in school.

According to the research, children who lack certain nutrients in their diet (particularly iron and iodine), or who suffer from protein energy malnutrition, hunger, parasitic infections or other disease, do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children.

Weak health and poor nutrition among school age children diminish their cognitive development either through physiological changes or by reducing their ability to participate in learning experiences or both.

The extra demands on school-age children (to perform chores, for example, or walk long distances to school) create a need for energy that is much greater than that of younger children.

Moreover, deficiencies of critical nutrients such as iodine, vitamin A and iron among the school-aged are pervasive.

Children with diminished cognitive abilities and sensory impairments naturally perform less well and are more likely to repeat classes and to drop out of school than children who are not impaired; they also enroll in school at a later age, if at all and finish fewer of schooling.

Further research by assistant minister Higher Education DR Kilemi Mwiria and programme experience has also shown that improving nutrition and health, through school feeding programmes, can lead to better performance and bring immense benefits to education.

The irregular school attendance of malnourished and unhealthy children is one of the key factors in poor performance- even temporary hunger, common in children who are not fed before going to school, can have an adverse effect on learning. Children who are hungry have more difficulty concentrating and performing complex tasks, even if otherwise well nourished.

It is in view of this that the Government of Kenya has, for decades initiated and sustained several school feeding programmes in order to improve and maintain the education standards in famine stricken parts of the country and other under privileged sectors of the society.

Panic grips water company staff over retrenchment

By KAVYU-KURA

ANXIETY has gripped workers at the Mwingi based Kiambera-Mwingi Water and Sanitation (Kimwasco) firm after it emerged that about 20 employees are likely to lose their jobs in the ongoing radical surgery.

The Link stumbled on a schedule of qualification requirement for all the 42 staff to be retained on completion of an ongoing staff vetting exercise out of the 65 employees currently in employment. Kimwasco runs the multi-million Kiambera-Mwingi water supply pipeline project that supplies water to Mwingi town and its environs.

But even as the deadline for the vetting ended in the first week of August, majority of the employees had declined to re-apply for their jobs afresh largely because they did not meet the new qualification.

In a random interview, employees who spoke to The Link in confidence said they were unwilling to re-apply for their jobs because they had not received any letters terminating their previous contracts with the company.

They said the way the staff vetting was being carried out with demands that employees re-apply for their jobs attaching their academic and professional certificates was an overt indication that the bosses had a pre-determined intention to sack them.

Some of the employees said that the very fact that the new qualification benchmark demands that some offices be filled by people with first university degrees and diplomas was a disqualification for most of the staff who have



KMWASCO board chairman Josphat Mulyungi who said vetting of workers is on. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

worked with the firm for over 15 years.

The staff said that very few of the current employees including some in the top hierarchy had such high qualification and the obvious conclusion was that almost all the employees would be sent packing. A quick look at the Kimwasco staff establishment quali-

fications schedule showed that the MD was expected to have a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical and civil engineering and MSC or MBA and five years experience.

Equally, the Finance and Administration Manager is required to have a degree in commerce or business ad-

ministration or CPA II while the Technical Manager must have a degree in water engineering. The two officers must have five years experience.

In the rest of the positions, the occupiers are expected to have attained relevant diploma, Technical Trade grade certificate. But The Link learnt that most of the employees did not have the required professional qualification as they were hired straight from formal schools leading to the current anxiety among the staff.

But the Kimwasco Board Chairman Josphat Mulyungi said that options for the unqualified staff were minimal as the Company was entering a new stage of ensuring competence, professionalism and efficiency in service delivery.

He however indicated that members of the staff who have excelled in their performance would be spared the axe even if they did not have the stipulated professional qualifications.

Announcing plans to vet the workers earlier, Mulyungi confirmed that the vetting of the workers was meant to improve efficiency in service delivery by ensuring that staff members were given jobs they were qualified to do.

"I want to tell you the vetting is meant to gauge the suitability of the workers to perform. Those in the wrong work placements will be moved to their right jobs while the unqualified will have to go home," said Mulyungi.

He noted the vetting would weed out unqualified and underperforming joy riders who used good fathers to secure jobs.

Mumias Sacco gets banking nod from Sasra

By JOEL JUMA

THE Sacco Society's Regulatory Authority (sasra) has issued a license to the Mumias Savings and Credit Cooperative Society (Mosacco) to offer banking services to its over 47,000 cane farmers in Kakamega County.

Mosacco got the nod from to enable its members enjoy deposit and withdrawal services at the society after a long wait.

The ministry of Cooperatives said that Kakamega County was now having two societies with operating licenses after Mosacco met requirements set by the Government.

Kakamega Teachers savings and Credit Cooperative Society (Kateco) with over 20,000 members were the

first one to be licensed in the County.

Mumias District Cooperative Officer Stanslaus Wambani said Mosacco was issued with the license after satisfying the requirements set by the regulatory body.

Wambani said other societies in the County were yet to get their licenses. "We have many that have applied but their documents are still being scrutinized before they can be allowed to offer banking services," said Wambani.

Mosacco Chief Executive Officer Aneriko Chitayi and the chairman Joseph Ayoyi said they had trained members on how to improve on their savings in order to qualify for huge loans.

Chitayi and Ayoyi explained that

the society has computerized its services in order to improve delivery of services to the members.

Chitayi said risk management and audit policies have also been developed to ensure that members funds are protected.

The officials were speaking at Mumias society offices after a board meeting. Wambani said restructuring at the society would also be effected to ensure that only workers who comply with the new cooperative movement regulations are retained.

The meeting comes a time when members and workers of the neighboring Sukari sacco are faced with panic following the dispatch of forensic experts to trace the loss of over Kshs. 60 million from the society.

Wambani said the experts were still auditing the society to ensure that records of members and former officials who took loans from the body are unearthed.

He said that the government will recover the lost cash from all beneficiaries including those who had left the premises of Mumias Sugar Company (MSC) after retiring.

Wambani said the Government wants members shares to be intact to enable them get loans faster when they are faced with emergencies.

He said that cases of members delaying to get money after applying for loans would also come to an end if the society management systems are streamlined as per the Government requirements.

ACK cautions MPs against enacting weak laws

From page 28

Raila Odinga should not allow the cabinet to mutilate the constitution by reviewing some of the clauses in their cabinet meetings.

Salala and Khamala said the clause on the one-third rule representation of either gender in public institutions should remain intact as per the constitution.

Salala explained that the clause that guarantees women representation in decision-making organs, which in-

clude in political parties and other offices should remain intact.

Salala however challenged women to demand for their rights instead of waiting to be nominated for positions in political parties. He explained that the church wants both men and women to compete for positions to avoid discrimination.

Salala and Khamala also said that churches will oppose a move by politicians to form alliances before the elections are held.

They explained that the constitu-

tion allows the party with majority to form the Government adding that a run off will be held in the event none of the presidential candidates qualifies to hold the office of the President.

"Pre-election alliances are illegal as we are not through with the election process for parties to start engaging in partnerships," said Salala who was speaking in his Mumias Diocese Office.

Khamala said that the parties need to carry out civic education for members to enable Kenyans understand the

requirements of the leaders before the campaign period.

He explained that it was shocking that parties were already sharing out positions in Counties without explaining to the electorate the roles of the office holders.

Cabinet minister Soita Shitanda has already declared that he will run

for the Kakamega County Governor seat while Ikolomani MP Bonny Khalwale is seeking Senatorship. Shinyalu MP Justus Kizito is in the race for Governorship in the County.

Mukurwe-ini farmers turn to dairy goat rearing

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

AFTER many years of tirelessly tilling the land without any tangible fruits due to the unpredictable weather patterns, Mukurwe-ini farmers have found a solution in goat rearing.

Simon Warui of Ngamwa area in the lower parts of Mukurwe-ini has been in the business of goats rearing over the last eight years and every year he makes over Kshs 100,000.

His seven dairy goats is the only source of income as every goat produces about five litres of milk which he sells locally.

Recently, he hosted Vice President Hon Kalonzo Musyoka in his home who wanted to learn how goat rearing can be replicated in other areas to alleviate poverty.

In his slogan that 'every farmer must work like a bee and eat honey or work like a fly and eat waste,' Warui says he has encouraged many farmers in putting more effort in their work.

The farmer has since joined other members of his group in a goat rearing project.

Every member of his group has been rearing the dairy goats which generate impressive income.

The goat rearing project has become one of the thriving businesses in the district compared to growing of cash crops business.

At the hilly and semi-arid district, farmers are taking advantage of the goat's business which is less engaging than keeping cows for dairy farming.

"Goats do not require extensive labour like cows and the projects need less land compared to keeping cows. We have seen many abandoning cash crops and embarking on dairy farming of goats," said the farmer.

Most of the farmers who have ventured in the business include women groups and youth groups who say that the income generated from the same is driving many into the business compared to rearing of cows.

The milk of goats is more nutritious than that of cows as it is rich in protein.

The goat's milk has more fat content and fetches Kshs 60 per litre compared to the milk of cows which is about Kshs 30 per litre.

It is also the best for the children and aged.

Most of the goats are reared using the zero grazing method.

Modern German Alpine breed has been doing very good in the



Kiamururu Mwangaza Women Group members in Mukurwe-ini district after they received goats from the Government. The function was presided over by Youths assistant Minister Mr. Kabando wa Kabando (in specks) and area DC Mr Isaac Masinde.
Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

district which is the leading district in the goat rearing project in Central region.

It is after this that the Government through the Mukurwe-ini District Development Office, the local Constituency Development Fund office, Ministry of Planning and the office of local MP who is also the Youth assistant Minister Hon Kabando wa Kabando joined hands to boost their work.

The project of goats rearing in Mukurwe-ini started about 20 years ago and over 5,800 goats are being reared in the district with 54 self help groups being involved.

Recently, the Government gave 30 dairy goats to Kiamururu Mwangaza Women Group in Mukurwe-ini district which will be used by members as a source of income.

Among the members of the group are widowed and single mothers who have been assisting each other in various socio-economic issues.

The members recently diversified into the rearing of pigs, dairy cattle and goats where members are encouraged and assisted to keep animals in their homesteads.

They also have started the propagation of tissue culture bananas where each household must plant at least 50 plants in addition to other fruit trees. Members must plant nappier grass for livestock

feed and sale.

These projects are geared towards improving the livelihoods of the members and their families based on the available resources and membership contributions.

They also provide nutrition and income to the households enabling the families to cater for school fees, health care and general subsistence for their children.

Milk from the goats has been used to supplement household diets providing much needed nutrition for those infected with HIV/Aids.

Continued interaction has ensured that members have become cohesive and are now able to identify other challenges and collectively initiate homegrown solutions.

Dairy Goats Association of Kenya sold the goats to the Ministry of Planning at a cost of Kshs 540,000.

The association will be following up the progress of the goats and will also help in marketing.

The Ministry of Planning has been involved in the projects in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Government through the Ministry of Livestock has also been training the group members on the goat rearing projects.

Each member took home one goat of German Alpine breed worth Kshs 18,000 which is expected to produce five litres per day. The group was also given chemicals and fodders for the animals just for a start.

Thanu Self Help Group recently received goats of Kshs 0.5 million goats and this is also aimed at enhancing milk production in the area.

"The goat's milk is more nutritious and rich in protein than that of cows and also very expensive. We are targeting women and youth groups and they are doing great jobs. We have been receiving many visitors from all over the country who want to learn more about the goat rearing projects," said Kabando who was accompanied by area DC Mr Isaac Masinde.

Masinde urged more farmers to form groups in order to get the benefits of the Government.

The milk is also very healthy for children and the aged.

"This is a diverse strategy to eradicate poverty in the remote side of the country like here. It is now upon farmers to work hard for better results," The DC said.

Buyers have been coming from as far as Sultan Hamud, Kisumu and Laikipia East among other areas.



Some of the goats being reared by Mukurwe-ini district groups. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Independent and se

INTRODUCTION

THE independent state offices listed in the Constitution (Article 248(3)) are Controller of Budget and the Auditor General. These two enjoy security of tenure, which means that they are not under direction or control by any person or authority. Similar tenure is also with the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Act promises to reduce jostling for political power that has threatened to push Kenya into an abyss of civil war and political turmoil as greedy politicians and their selfish backers compete to control the mantles of state power that comes with authority to fire and hire public servants. This unbridled, raw power has been dispersed to other arms of government such as parliament, which must vet and approve all public office appointees before they can take up office. Although the President still holds the powers to appoint office bearers of the independent offices, Parliament has to approve the nominees.

Further the new law echoes the principles outlined in the Constitution under leadership and integrity (Chapter six). It stipulates that

- (a) Authority assigned to a state officer is a public trust whose responsibility is service to the people
- (b) Selection of state officers must be done on the basis of personal integrity, competence

- (e) Accountability to the public for decisions and actions

Objectives

The Constitution (Article 249) spells out objectives of independent offices as follows

- (a) To protect the sovereignty of the people
- (b) Secure observance by all state organs of democratic values and principles
- (c) Promote constitutionalism (rule of law)

Selection Criteria

The Constitution (Article 228) outlines the criteria to be used in appointing of independent offices. He/ She must:

- (a) Be a Kenyan Citizen
- (b) Have extensive knowledge on public finance or at least ten years experience in auditing public finance management (Article 228 and 229 of the Constitution)
- (c) Holds a degree in finance, accounting or economics from a recognized University in Kenya
- (d) Is a member in good standing of a professional body for accountants recognized by law

Procedures for appointment

The new legislation provides



Appointments to public offices have in the discretion of the appointing authority more. This has led to the appointment of least relatives of the appointing authority to public offices in unclear and opaque ways. Consequently, appointees have more often than not ended up serving the selfish interests of their masters to the detriment of the public good. The enactment of the Independent Offices Act strengthened by the dictates of the Constitution

offers the much-needed step towards merit based appointments. Faith Muiruri, Auditor General, takes a look at the provisions of the Independent Offices (Appointment) Act, 2011 and relevant provisions of the Constitution.

tion committee. The selection committee comprises of representatives from:

- (a) Office of the President
- (b) Office of the Prime Minister
- (c) Ministry of Finance
- (d) State Law Office
- (e) Ministry of Public Service
- (f) Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya

The committee's main role is to review the applications and select at least three persons qualified as Auditor General or Controller of Budget.

All proceedings for selection and short listing of candidates are to be held in public after which a report is to be submitted to parliament stipulating scores of each candidate interviewed with the criteria used in selecting them.

All names of selected candidates are forwarded to the President. The law allows the President room to nominate one candidate each for the positions of Auditor General and Controller of Budget then forwards the same to Parliament.

The Act provides that where the National Assembly

- (a) Approves the nominees, the speaker must forward their names to the President for appointment.
- (b) However in the event that parliament rejects the nominees, the speaker is to notify the President.

The President is required by the new law to submit fresh nominees from the list previously presented to him by the Public Service Commission.

However, if Parliament still rejects the new list submitted by the President, the nomination process begins afresh.

Disqualification

The Act clearly outlines conditions under which a candidate may be disqualified for an independent office:

- (a) Is a member of parliament
- (b) Is a member of a county assembly
- (c) Is a member of a local authority
- (d) Has not met his tax obligation
- (e) Has been removed from office for contravention of any law
- (f) Is bankrupt

Vacancy

An independent office becomes vacant if the holder

“Controller of Budget shall not approve any withdrawal not authorised by law.”

- (c) and suitability
Objectivity and impartiality are to be the guiding factors in ensuring decisions are not influenced by nepotism, favouritism, other improper motives or corrupt practices
- (d) Selfless service based solely on public interest

that the President can only appoint independent office holders whose names have been approved by Parliament.

The Act however empowers the President to declare vacancies that may arise at the independent offices and invite applications.

The applications are sent to the Public Service Commission (PSC) which constitutes a selec-



President Kibaki displays new constitution during the Promulgation ceremony. The appointing authority have been trimmed. All

Secured state offices

past been left to the so the presidency. qualified cronies and um, strategic public uently, the appoint- rving parochial and triment of national ffices (Appointment) nstitution therefore nents. Our Sub-edi- ndependent Offices nstitution.



**Mr. Keriako Tobiko,
Director of Public Prosecutions**



**Mr. Edward Ouko,
Auditor General**



**Mrs Agnes Nangila Odhiambo,
Controller of Budget**

- (a) Dies
- (b) Resigns from office
- (c) Is removed from office based on provisions in the Constitution (Article 251) which include
 - (i) serious violation of the Constitution or any other law
 - (ii) gross misconduct, whether in the performance of the member's or office holders functions
 - (iii) physical or mental incapacity to perform the

- (iv) functions
- (iv) incompetence
- (v) bankruptcy

Controller of Budget

The Controller of Budget is a state office mandated to oversee the implementation of the budgets at both the national and county level by authorizing withdrawals from public funds namely equalization fund, consolidated fund and other public funds and Revenue Funds for

County Governments.

Core duties

- (i) Authorization and approval of fund withdrawals for spending by public institutions
- (ii) Submits after every four months to each house of Parliament a report on the implementation of the budgets of national and county governments
- (iii) Oversee budget implementation by all governments

Auditor General

The Auditor General has been vested with powers to audit and report on the accounts of any entity that is funded from public funds.

Core duties

The Constitution (Article 229 (4)) has vested the Auditor General with powers to audit and report within six months after each financial year

- (i) The accounts of the national and county governments
- (ii) The accounts of all funds and authorities of the national and county governments
- (iii) The accounts of all courts
- (iv) The accounts of every commission and independent offices established by the constitution

- (v) The accounts of the National Assembly, the Senate and County Assemblies
- (vi) The accounts of political parties funded from public funds
- (vii) The public debt
- (viii) The accounts of any entity that legislation requires the Auditor General to audit

In article 229 (6) of the Constitution, the audit report must indicate whether or not public money has been spent appropriately and in an effective way.

All audit reports be submitted to Parliament or the respec-

Further the Constitution (Article 157 (6)) vests powers of prosecution to the Director of Public Prosecutions who may

- (i) institute and undertake criminal proceedings against any person before any court (other than court martial) in respect of any offense alleged to have been committed
- (ii) take over and continue any criminal proceedings commenced in any court that have been instituted by another person or authority on their behalf

“Auditor General to audit the accounts of the national and county governments.”

County Assembly to pave way for debate and appropriate action within three months.

Director Public Prosecutions

While the Constitution in Article 248 (33) only lists two offices as independent offices, the tenure enjoyed by the two are similar to that of the Director of public Prosecution.

Core Functions

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has powers to direct the Inspector General of the National Police Service to investigate any information or allegation of criminal conduct

- (iii) discontinue any criminal proceedings before judgment is delivered

The Constitution (Article 157(7)) states that in the event that any proceedings are discontinued, the defendant is to be acquitted. However the DPP can only discontinue a prosecution with the approval of the court.

Unlike in the independent offices, the DPP can only be removed from office based on recommendations by a tribunal to be appointed by the President (Article 158 (4)).



ulogation. As the constitution takes effect, Presidential powers as an appointments must now be approved by parliament.