



Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o, Medical Services minister.

Sweeping changes expected under the new health policy

By PETER MUTUKU

THE management of the Health Sector in Kenya is expected to change drastically if the proposals contained in the new policy document is to go by.

Provision of health services under the devolved system of government policy document requires new institutional and management strategies.

The Kenya Health Policy 2012 -2030 has listed a raft of proposals on the provision of healthcare in the two levels of government that seek to enhance accountability, reporting and management.

The policy offers the devolved institutions operational autonomy with efficient and cost-effective monitoring, evaluation, reviewing and reporting systems.

The policy borrows heavily from the Constitution which assigns the larger portion of delivery of health services to the Counties and retains Referral Services to

the Central government.

According to the policy, the National government's mandate includes developing national policy and legislation, setting standards, national reporting, supervision, sector coordination and resource mobilization.

Under the devolved system, the Ministry of Health is to offer technical support with emphasis on planning, development and monitoring of health services and delivery standards throughout the country.

The policy also requires the national government to monitor quality and standards of performance of the County Governments and community organizations in the provision of health services as well as provide guidelines on tariffs to be charged by respective health facilities.

The national government is also expected to directly support the establishment of institutions with

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Medics call for review of archaic health laws

By FAITH MUIRURI

THE Kenya Medical Association (KMA) has called for the repeal of archaic laws which continue to derail efforts to address the glaring maternal deaths resulting from unsafe abortions in the country

Dr. Boaz Otieno-Nyunya who is the convener of Reproductive Health Committee of the KMA says that although the Constitution explicitly specifies the minimum situations in which abortion is permitted, the legal regime on abortion has largely been characterised by restrictions and a lack of clarity on what the law provides for.

He says that it is unfortunate that the country still retains retrogressive laws which

perpetuate inequality and increase women's vulnerability and risk of maternal death.

Dr Nyunya who is the Chairman, Kenya Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society cites the penal code (section 158) which still hampers attempts to arrest deaths arising from back street abortions that occur in unsafe and unsanitary conditions in the hands of quacks.

He says that maternal deaths in the country remain unacceptably high with approximately 8,000 women dying every year from complications arising from pregnancy and child bearing. Unsafe abortion accounts for 2,600 of these deaths.

Studies indicate that nine women die on a daily basis as a result of an unsafe abortion. Adolescent girls represent four of the 10 deaths

registered in public hospitals. In Kenya an estimated 308,000 abortions occur annually.

A study conducted in the slums of Nairobi found that 50percent of women who died from unsafe abortion did not seek care at a health facility

Another study estimates that more than 20,000 women are admitted each year to public hospitals for complications of incomplete and unsafe abortion which costs the tax payer Ksh 18 million annually, in Post Abortion Care.

The situation has been compounded by weak and uncoordinated approach to policy implementation and the low investment in reproductive health.

Speaking at the 40th Kenya Medical Association Annual Scientific Conference in Nairobi,

Dr Nyunya underscores the need to re-examine and reinforce laws and policies on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights.

He singles out the Reproductive Health Policy which he says aims at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and the girl child but does not address unsafe abortion.

Dr Nyunya says that the population policy on the other hand only affirms that all couples have right to decide freely the number and spacing of their children.

The Penal code, he says legitimizes abortion only in cases where the life of the woman is at risk and according to FIDA could also be

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capacity to provide healthcare at the county level during the transition period which runs to 2017.

The Policy is also clear about the functional assignments between the two levels of government with respect to accountability, reporting and management. The policy provides for the establishment of the County Health Department to coordinate and manage health services at the County Level.

Further, the County Health Department is to license and give accreditation to Non State Health Service

Providers (HSPs) and finance County level Health services.

County authorities will also be expected to maintain, enhance and regulate health service providers mainly in collaboration with the national Government, gazette regulations for community managed health supplies to be implemented at county level.

The County Health Department will also manage assets, channel public and other funds to develop health facilities and compile information at County level on implementation of projects in order to document value for money.

The department also has to invest in Public Health Facilities and develop an investment plan to enable fulfillment of the highest attainable right to health. The two governments will also be required to document annual progress as required by the Constitution.

They should also have a legal framework for on-lending arrangements to facilitate loan repayments and fees for use of assets by licensed.

The policy directs that a professional and technical management structure be established at each county, to coordinate delivery of the

constitutionally defined County health services through the network of health facilities in the County.

In order to achieve that, the County governments will be required under the policy to establish a County Health Management team whose responsibilities will be to coordinate strategic and operational planning, supervision, monitoring and review of health service delivery in the county.

Apart from coordinating the delivery of health services in the County, the team will also provide a linkage with County Executive and other actors to facilitate health sector dialogue at the

County.

The team will also provide leadership and stewardship for overall health management in the County, through building linkages with, and putting in place influencing strategies for health related sector's in the county, such as education, roads, gender, nutrition, and others.

This will help improve health services and mobilize resources as well as coordinate the referral function across the level 3 facilities in the county, and between the different levels of the health system in line with the sector referral strategy.

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extended to include cases where conception is as a result of rape or other sexual violation.

Kenya Medical Practitioners & Dentists Board Guidelines on Termination of Pregnancy on the other hand outlines that the laws of Kenya do not allow for termination of pregnancy on demand and severe penalties are meted out to those found guilty of procuring or attempting to procure an abortion or miscarriage. There is room, however, for carrying out termination when in the opinion of attending doctors it is necessary in the interest of the health of the mother or baby.

In these circumstances, it is strongly advised that the practitioner consults with at least two senior and experienced colleagues, obtains their opinion in writing, and performs the operation openly in hospital if he considers himself competent to do so in the absence of a gynaecologist.

He is, however, optimistic that the Constitution offers a reprieve to provision reproductive health care. According to Dr Nyunya, the constitution specifies conditions under which abortion may be legally provided. He says this may help address the terrible toll caused by unsafe illegal abortion.

"The Constitution (Article 26(4)) explicitly permits abortion when in the opinion of a trained health professional, there is need for emergency treatment, or the life or health of the mother is in danger, or if permitted by any other written law," he explains.

Dr Nyunya notes that a "trained health professional" can be interpreted to include doctors, clinical officers, nurses and midwives who have appropriate training in providing information, counselling and the procedure of safe and comprehensive abortion care services.

However, the proposed Health Act March 2012 appears to contradict the provision and attempts to criminalize "elective abortion". "The bill tends to lump abortion with other Family Planning methods and turns a blind eye to article 26 of the constitution," he laments. The Act is meant actual-



Dr. Boaz Otieno-Nyunya, chairman, Kenya Obstetrical and Gynaecological society.

ise Article 43 of the Constitution; to provide for the maintenance and advancement of health and the provision of health services of the highest attainable standard; to provide for the powers, functions, and responsibilities of the Health Council, the Health Services Authority, the National Health Inspectorate Service and the Council for Health Professionals and for other connected purposes. He says the bill quotes article 43 and ignores article 26 yet it discusses issues of article 26.

"In so doing it attempts to dilute the rights accorded to Kenyans in article 26, particularly 26(4). It is a form of dishonesty," he cautions.

He adds that the bill should have as one of its objectives compliance with Kenya's regional and international human rights obligations.

Speaking at the same function Dr. A. Otara who is a member of KMA Reproductive Health Committee explains that sexual and reproductive rights derive from fundamental human rights and freedoms that are already enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya and are included in several international agreements and treaties

to which the Government of Kenya is a signatory. Dr Otara says that the country should prioritize SRHR by increasing access to health care, access to family planning services and emergency obstetric care.

Dr John Nyamu of the Reproductive Health Right Alliance who was present at the meeting said that health workers can now be able to work in an enabling environment in the provision of reproductive health services including provision of safe and legal abortion.

He said that currently the organization was training health workers on the need to embrace values and attitudes sensitive to the plight of women seeking reproductive health services.

He said that health workers must realign their operations to provisions in the constitution to avoid violating women rights.

"We are also engaged in a series of campaigns to highlight the magnitude and consequences of unsafe abortion at the community level and empowering health workers to avoid security and legal issues," he adds during the conference. Ends

Mt Kenya University Kakamega branch gets more students

By TITUS MAERO

THE Mt Kenya University's Kakamega Campus, which was opened last year has received an increased student enrollment of 446 from 120.

The Campus Principal Dr Philemon Bureti said the institution has 320 school based students and 120 regular students, who are undertaking various programmes.

Bureti said since the campus was moved from Kakamega Hill School compound to its new premises at the Mega Mall in the Central Business District (CBD) this year, many other programmes have been introduced.

He pointed out that currently the campus is offering Masters Degree in Education and Masters Degree in Psychiatry, eleven (11) Bachelor Degree Programmes, Six (5) Diploma programmes and Information Technology (IT) certificate courses.

Speaking to reporters in his office in Kakamega, the official noted that Bachelors Degree is offered in Education Science, Education Arts, Medical Laboratory, Public Health, Counseling Psychiatry and Special needs education programme among others.

He said diploma courses are offered in Education, Community Health, Community Development, Business Management and Information Technology (IT), while certificate courses are offered in Community Development, Community Health, Information Technology (IT) and Business Management.

Bureti added that apart from the campus permanent lecturers, they are supplemented on part time basis by lecturers drawn from Universities situated in the western region such as Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) and Mase-

no University.

The principal said most programmes are charged Ksh60,000 per semester, which he said, was low compared to what other universities are charging students in the country.

The official said the campus targets to have at least 3,000 full time and part time students in the next few years noting that the institution has received overwhelming applications from school leavers who are interested in undertaking various programmes.

Commenting on the current physical infrastructure at the newly acquired premises, Bureti said the campus had taken the whole of the second floor at the Mega Mall, which he said, has adequate space to accommodate over 3,000 students.

He said the University decided to set up the campus in Kakamega County following massive applications from school leavers who reside in the area which has few higher institutions of learning.

Bureti said apart from providing education, the facility has created employment to the local people noting that it has over 30 administrative staff adding that casual employment is also offered whenever need arises.

He, however, said there are challenges facing the institution which include inadequate rental houses for the staff members, lecturers adding that the worst part of it is serious inadequacy of hostels for students.

He said Mt Kenya University is a chartered institution operating as a nonprofit making institution of learning noting that the main University is in Thika town while other campuses are situated in Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Kitale, Eldoret, Meru, Lodwar and in Kigali Rwanda.

Gov't to give free sanitary pads to needy girls

By HENRY OWINO

GOVERNMENT in partnership with African Cotton Industries has launched a programme under which free sanitary towels will be provided to public primary schools across the country.

The programme is expected to benefit 443,858 needy girls of whom 4,114 will be drawn from public primary schools from 82 targeted districts. The introduction of the free sanitary towels is expected to continue in the 2011/2012 financial years and subsequent financial years. The government will allocate Ksh240 million in the financial year for the sanitary towels as a start.

The Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, assured the school girls that government was committed to providing quality education and training for all. He added that gender equality remain important benchmarks in government in quest to educate young people.

"We are not launching the sanitary towels programme in a vacuum. We do it as part of the comprehensive Gender Policy in Education Sector that aims at reducing existing gender disparities in access, retention, transition and achievement in education," Prime Minister, Raila clarified.

The premier echoed that government is concerned about girls who continue to drop out of school or fail to enroll in greater numbers compared to boys. He further observed survival rates for girls in school are still low compared to those of boys which lead to low completion rates among girls at all levels.

"Lack of appropriate sanitary facilities and access to sanitary towels for girls has been identified as a deterrent to schooling," Raila cautioned.

The Prime Minister made the remarks during the official launch of sanitary towels programme held at Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), Nairobi.

Raila stated studies done in Kenya by various organizations reveal that approximately 500,000 girls miss at four days of schooling every month because they are unable to afford sanitary pads. This he alluded amounts to 10-25 per cent of pupil-teacher contact time lost.

"It puts our girls at a disadvantage against their male counterparts. It affects the performance of girls in examinations. In the past, this problem has partly been addressed through isolated provision of sanitary towels to girls in some schools by some of our partners. The impact of such an approach has been largely minimal," the Premier mentioned.

Raila appealed to more partners to supplement the government's efforts of maintaining girls from disadvantaged backgrounds in school through programmes like the one launched.

Through the programme, Raila said the government has provided the needy girls with sanitary towels to cater for three terms starting term two of the 2012 school year. He added in some selected districts in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) regions, the girls would get additional wears to accompany the sanitary towels.

Prime Minister however, observed that due to inadequacy of funds, not all needy girls have benefited from the programme. "As we speak, about 2.6 million girls, that is 2.2 million from



Delighted school pupils after receiving sanitary pads from Ministry of Education. Photo/Henry Owino

primary and 400,000 from secondary schools require support to access sanitary towels. About 300,000 of them particularly in ASAL districts will require additional wears in addition to sanitary towels," regretted the Prime Minister.

The cost of achieving the target is estimated at Ksh2.6 billion. He therefore appealed for public private partnership to support the needy girls to enable them attend school regularly. Raila asked Treasury to increase the budgetary allocation for the vital initiative in the 2012/2013 financial year so that more girls in Kenya can access the essential tools. He hoped to see in future when access to sanitary towels will be given the same status as the provision of instructional materials and other resources in all schools.

The Minister for Education, Mutula Kilonzo said the introduction of the towels by the government will enable girls to remain in schools until they finish their education. He pointed out this will help address gender disparity experienced in most schools in the country.

"Despite the remarkable increases in access at both primary and secondary school, statistics show that over one million children are out of school in primary schools. Majority of these are in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) areas pockets of poverty and urban slums. A big proportion of that percentage is girls. Studies have shown that one of the reasons why girls miss classes or drop out altogether is maturation or the onset of puberty," Mutula explained.

Mutula regretted the money allocated for the good programme is not adequate to meet needs of the 2.6 million girls in primary and secondary schools. He appealed to Prime Minister, Raila Odinga to take up the matter personally so that the programme can be scaled up to the national level.

"The girl child is not a second hand citizen. She is entitled to equal treatment as others under Article 27(1) and (2) of the Constitution. Her best

interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning her under Article 53(2); she is entitled to free and compulsory basic education under Article 53(1) (b)," Mutula argued.

The Education Minister urged the State to take affirmative action programmes like the one launched to ensure that as a youth, the girl child gets access to relevant education and training under Article 55(1).

The reform programmes undertaken in the education sector by the government since 2003 by introducing free primary education (FPE), has helped achieve access, equality, relevance and quality in education.

"The reforms undertaken in the education sector during that period aim at accelerating achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) and education for all (EFA) by 2015. Additionally it focuses on aligning the education sector to the new constitution and vision 2030," simplified Mutula.

The overall objective is providing education that is free and compulsory, affordable and accessible especially to families and children from low social-economic strata of society.

According Education Minister, the introduction of FPE in 2003, enrolment in primary school has risen from 5.9 million to 9.6 million pupils in 2012. Mutula observed that since the government introduced Free Day Secondary Education in 2008, the enrolment has increased from 800,000 to 1.7 million students in 2012.

"As a result of the transition, the rate from primary to secondary has risen from 47 per cent in 2003 to 72.5 per cent in 2012. This is above UNESCO benchmark of 70 per cent," the Minister applauded.

The Education Minister outlined other programmes in the Ministry which includes; Task Force on alignment of the Education Sector to the new constitution and vision 2030 mandated to review the current education system to ensure it in coincides with current global trends of educa-

tion, the Constitution and vision 2030 in order to make the Kenyan education system globally competitive and market driven.

In addition to these, the Education Minister explicated more policy initiatives that Ministry is in the process of reviewing education sector with an aim of aligning them with the new constitution to make them implementable frameworks with the devolved governments.

For instance; gender in education policy which aims at eliminating gender disparities and achieving gender equity and equality in relation to access, retention, completion and transition in primary and secondary education by 2015.

Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) policy whose intention is to mainstream ECDE into primary school cycle so that no child is left out of basic education. HIV and AIDS policy which recognizes that although the ministry has domesticated the National HIV and AIDS continues to be a threat to education achievements. An impact assessment on HIV and AIDS has been undertaken and the results once disseminated to stakeholders, will inform the policy review.

Child friendly schools are significant personal and social environment in the lives of its students. The ministry has ensured that the education environments are safe, healthy and protective and are endowed with trained teachers, adequate resources and appropriate physical, emotional and social conditions for learning. Peace education policy which has been disseminated to the stakeholders is now ready for publication.

Mutula promised that his Ministry, in collaboration with other Ministries like Provincial Administration and National Security, Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs and partners like UNICEF is in the process of rolling out a National Peace Education Campaign with the aim of using education as a means of positively influencing.

Relief as needy students get help

By MORRIS GITHENYA

TWO students who had dropped out of school due to lack of fees can now continue with their education after a Good Samaritan intervened and paid their fees.

The two, Edwin Murigi and Hannah Kimani from Kigumo district in Murang'a County were relieved after Kamau Mweha pledged to pay their school fees.

Kamau said he learnt that Murigi had dropped from Githumu Secondary School last year after his parents were unable to pay his school fees. Hannah, Kamau said, had failed to join Ngandu Girls High School in Nyeri despite scoring 365 marks in KCPE exams.

"As a leader, I was moved by the plight of the needy students who were forced to stay at home as their peers remained in school learning," said Kamau.

Meanwhile, the Government has been urged to ensure that polytechnics are upgraded to technical institutions to help of the community.

Murang'a South Knut Executive Secretary Amos Murigi said Kiranga polytechnic which was established in 1962 should be upgraded to a technical institution.

He said currently most parents spend a lot of money taking their youth to technical institutions far away from their villages. This had dis-franchised youth from poor families who opt for casual jobs in the villages as their colleagues pursue education.

"If Kiranga polytechnic can be considered for upgrading millions of shillings spent in securing food and accommodation for the children could be utilized in other ways," said Murigi.

Murang'a North region, he said has benefitted with Michuki Technical and Murang'a College of Technology where thousands of youth acquire marketable skills at minimal costs.

Schools ordered to get certificates for students

By BEKADZO TONDO

SCHOOLS can now apply for birth certificates on behalf of their students to hasten the issuance process, Assistant Minister for Immigration, Mr. Francis Baya, has said.

He said the Ministry of education must enforce the directive to make sure that no child misses national examination for delays in acquisition of the vital documents.

Speaking to residents of Tsangalaweni in his Ganze constituency where he raised funds in aid of Tsangalaweni ACK church, Baya said that the Immigration department now allows respective schools to apply for the certificates on behalf of their students to avoid delays that initially marred the process.

"The Immigration department is working closely with the Ministry of Education to enable schools to apply for their respective students both in the primary and secondary schools," said Baya.

He said that the government will deal firmly with officers who demand bribes from applicants before they can process the documents.

Sad tales of abject poverty amidst plenty in Taveta

TAITA Taveta County is endowed with enormous resources that remain largely untapped.

Although, the County is home to World class tourist hotels such Kilauni, Ngulia, the Lions Bluff lodge, Sarova Taita hills and Sarova Saltlick game lodges, residents live in abject poverty as income generated from the resources is hardly ploughed back to the community.

"We host rare species in our home turf but nothing promising has been forth coming. Instead we only have to contend with the relentless agony of constant rivalry with the wild animals," said Jeremiah Kiwoi of Mwatate constituency.

In a telephone interview, Kiwoi says: "The National park has taken up 62 percent of this County but surprisingly, a vast section of this land does not have wildlife."

"I am sure that sometimes when most tourists come here for game drives normally find it boring because at times they have to go through some expansive plains before they spot wildlife. This is pathetic because they also come across a huge population of squatters residing adjacent to parks," he notes.

Says Kiwoi "If the wildlife occupies only 20 percent of the park, then why should we have squatters around. Instead of politicizing the issue of land while residents are suffering, I think the some sections of the park can be de-gazetted and be allocated to those squatters. It is not a crime to de-gazette land belonging to a park."

Past injustices attributed to land grabbing from the colonial time in 1948 was to blame for the poverty, human wildlife conflict and landlessness that are currently afflicting the residents.

Taita Taveta County council Chairman Mr Erasmus Mwarabu says the county covers an area of 17,128.3km

COMMENT

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

square but a huge acreage of this was grabbed by the colonial government which carved out some 10,000 km square (62 percent of the County) and converted it to national park.

He says the Queen of England gave out the remaining land to British warlords who participated in the Second World War as war tokens.

He resents the fact that warlords acquired huge tracts of land in Taveta, Mwatate and Voi after the end of the Second World War and the expansive land was later converted into the current sisal farms thereby continuing to worsen the issue of landlessness in the County.

"In Mwatate major Lezen was given over 40,000 acres. He used the land to hunt wild animals such as the rhinos, elephants and the big cats for game trophies.

This merciless grabbing left scores of locals displaced and went on to breed thousands of squatters and the subsequent dispute with animals," notes Mwarabu.

However later in the 50's, a local freedom fighter, Mengo Woresha led an uprising that saw Major Lezen relinquish some of the land he had acquired and settled at 33,000 acres where the Teita Sisal estate falls.

As the Mwatate ward civic leader explains, before the colonialists came, locals used to plan usage of land in such a way that the upstream, was reserved as a water catchment area, while the lower zones were left for settlements and cultivation respectively and finally herding and hunting was done on the plains.

According to the leader due this well organized system of land usage,

the locals used to live well with the wildlife without any conflict.

"After the 62 percent was taken away, most of the population was forced to encroach on the forested zones," narrates the Council Chair.

As a result, water levels from the Voi River have dwindled drastically as the river originates from the hills and serves wildlife and residents at the lower areas.

"This forces wildlife to stray from parks and invade villages in search of water leading to conflict with the locals," notes Mwarabu.

Due to water shortage in the parks, jumbos have been invading villages adjacent to the parks and consequently cases of human-wildlife conflict continue to escalate. Worst hit are areas of Aliya, Marungu, Mwanda, Msorongo, Maktau and Chakaleri in the Mwatate and Ikanga.

Mkatau Chief Cripus Mnyika laments that farmers often count losses following huge destruction of crops such as pawpaw, maize, beans, and cowpeas among others and he says this has plunged the area into severe drought. "Residents hopes of getting good yields are often doomed since crops get destroyed by the marauding elephants," says the Chief.

Alphans Mborio another resident of Maktau says "Students have not been attending school in fear of attack by wild animals that crisscross the ways to school."

He adds: "We are also forced to be indoors by 6 pm because the jumbos come out to invade our farms. The only time that we feel a bit secure is at around noon because they go to look for shelters under the trees due to hot temperatures."

However despite the constant anguish of rampant human elephant conflict, the residents have remained adamant that they do not want an electric fence erected around the park so as to

bring the old problem to an end. They allege that KWS cannot be trusted again as it has a history of extending its boundaries and grabbing community land.

Mwarabu recalls that after the establishment of the Tsavo National Park, KWS further gazetted some of the wildlife corridors which were initially in the community land.

"In Njukini area in Taveta, 4000 acres were reserved as migration corridors for animals migrating from the Mkomanzi National Park in Tanzania to Tsavo, but in 1997 KWS grabbed the area and gazzetted it," he says.

In another scenario, he claims the wildlife conservation body had grabbed some 300 acres at man-eaters near Voi which were initially identified by the council for establishment of a tourist resort.

History of man-eaters dates back to the 17th Century when two Ghost lions famously known as-man eaters reportedly killed about 135 workers of the Kenya-Uganda railway construction, before a celebrated hunter Col John Henry Patterson killed them.

The story has been documented in a popular movie-the ghost and the darkness by Val Kilmer in a documentary which reveals how the two ghost lions devoured hundreds of railway line workers at the Tsavo during the construction of the rail around Voi town in 1898.

"This is a rich history which we want the locals to benefit from but unfortunately the place was shackled by KWS," regrets the Mwatate Ward councillor.

And prior to the establishment of the Tsavo, the infamous Mudanda rock in Tsavo East was a hunting ground for the locals where after hunting; they would dry the bush meat on the rock.

The site which locals hold in reverence harbors traces of Taita culture.

The residents are up in arms against the move by KWS to gazette it.

"Mudanda comes from a local word Kudanda which locally means to dry meat. The rock carries some great importance to the community because the culture of Taita is diminishing. KWS should have left it to the community so that we could partner with it and establish ecotourism projects so that tourists would come and familiarize themselves with the local culture," observes Mwarabu.

Such are the bitter experiences that have made locals object the issue of fencing.

In some areas it has been difficult for KWS to put up the fence around the buffer zones- an area which separates the community land and the park- because the residents feel that once the fence is put, the wildlife body might in future convert it into permanent boundary thereby further eating into the community land.

"Normally buffer zones are not supposed to be fenced because they neither belong to the park nor do they belong to the community. But where there is a serious human animal conflict we normally opt to fence the area to solve the problem," explains Wilson Korir the Assistant Director, Tsavo conservation area.

"Try to sample a situation where a portion of your land has been grabbed and you are left with a tiny area to do subsistence farming for your family, then herds of elephants storm your farm and destroy everything, how would you feel?" laments Maktau ward Councillor Flumence Mshila.

In the recent past, the issue of fencing has taken center stage during public hearings of the parliamentary committee on land and natural resources in Voi.

Local leaders led by Minister for

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Nyanza teachers meet in Nyeri as a way of promoting cohesion

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

IN an effort to promote cohesion and integration, over 1,000 secondary school teachers from Nyanza region are meeting in Nyeri town for their annual delegate's conference.

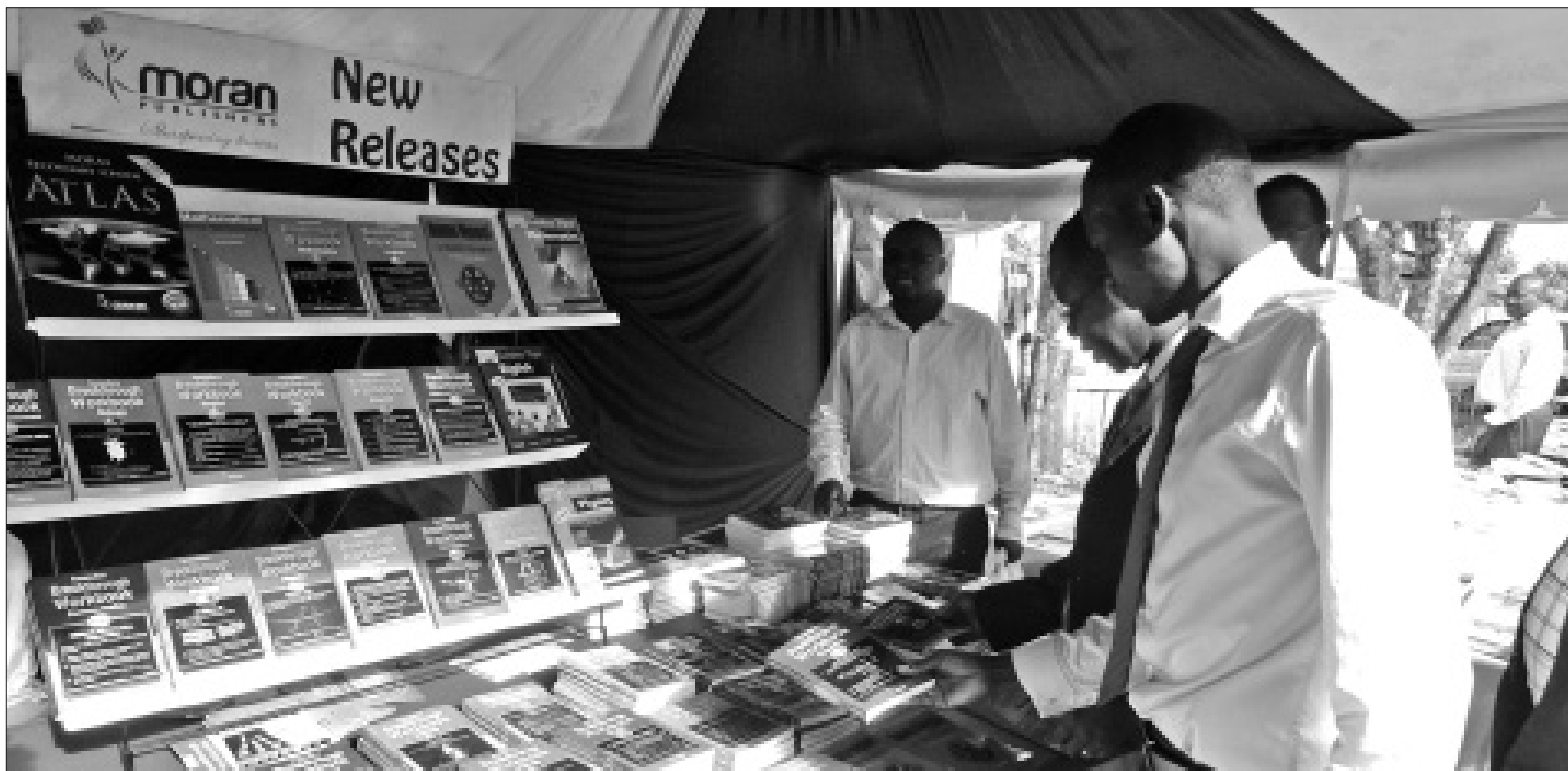
The Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association (KSSHA) held their annual meeting at Nyamachaki PCEA hall in the town for five days instead of their usual venues of their region.

The KSSHA national vice chairman John Awiti said this will also promote unity and consistency among the Kikuyu and Luo communities. "We resolved that this year we shall hold it here in order to promote cohesion and change management which is this year's theme," said Awiti.

Awiti who was accompanied by Nyanza region association chairman Innocent Mugunde emphasized the need to strengthen cohesion in education sector.

The ten of thousands of teachers attending the meeting have helped to boost business in Nyeri town with all hotels being fully booked in the town.

Special Programmes minister who is also the area MP Esther Murugi and Central Provincial Direc-



Nyanza teachers visiting books exhibition at Nyamachaki PCEA church hall in Nyeri town recently during the Nyanza branch five day annual delegate's conference of Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

tor of Education Patrick Nyagasia addressed the meeting where they lauded the plans of holding their meeting away from home saying it was a good exchange programme.

Central region branch will also move to Nyanza region soon to hold their similar annual meeting as part of the exchange programme. "We also want parents to know

that the myth of their children being admitted at local schools on suspicion that they will be harassed outside their County must be forgotten," added Mugunde.

He said there is all needs for the parents to know that a child can be admitted in any secondary school just like the parents can work in any town in this country.

Sad tales of abject poverty amidst plenty in Taveta

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Gender, Children and Social Development and Taveta MP Dr Naomi Shaban told the committee that if the fence must be erected, then there should be two fences with one right at the park boundary and another around the buffer zone.

"We need two fences so as to avoid further friction with the KWS concerning park boundaries. It is a very vast acreage which falls in that no man's land so we must be allowed to utilize it as well" proposed Dr Shaban.

Taita Taveta Human Rights Watch chair Haji Mwakio argued that during drought, local herdsman usually rely on the buffer zone to graze their animals and at the same time wild animals also rely on the place for pasture therefore locals should not be denied access to the area by KWS.

cess to the area by KWS.

"The area between the park and the community land is supposed to benefit both parties but now only KWS benefits from the same," said Mwakio.

The locals also took issue with the local sisal farms and proposed that justice be done so that the locals get back their land saying that currently only a few individuals from outside the County are benefiting at the expense of the locals who are living as squatters.

"A very huge percentage of our community land is in the hands of individuals from outside. All the sisal estate plus the parks belong to private entities while the locals languish in abject poverty," she adds.

Our lives could be different because we could use the expansive

acreage for ranching and ecotourism given that this region was declared a livestock disease free zone.

If the economy of Botswana relies heavily on ranching, I believe we have the potential to turn around the fortunes of this region if only we get justice," concludes Mwarabu.

Taita Resource center executive director Mr Christopher Mwambingu, expresses concern that if the current conflict is not resolved legally, the on-going tension is likely to escalate into violence because the population is gradually growing and there is no land left for new generation.

"What was once community land are taken over by sisal estates, national parks, tourists and mineral prospectors, including some controversial animal sanctuaries, compounded by tensions among the native and non-

native ethnic and tribal groups now living in the area," he says.

According to him the current land laws are not understood by all stakeholders, particularly the many poor and marginalized local residents, most of whom have seen little benefit from the area's economic potential. He observes that legal requirements are inconsistently applied, and when this happens, the outcomes rarely favour the local population to the area.

To avoid the situation escalating into violence, Mwambingu says there is a need to facilitate a process that will help all involved come up with lasting solutions that respond adequately to multiple priorities.

According to him, the Taita resource center has launched a project that seeks to bring together Taita

Taveta professionals, land stakeholders, landless citizens and other responsible parties to highlight and begin to address the thorny issue of land ownership in Taita Taveta County through a process of dialogue.

"Taita resource Centre will provide educative platforms for lobbying and advocacy as well as document land related historical injustices in the county. The activities will empower the citizenry to make informed conscious decisions regarding land and refrain from political manipulation," says the director.

MPs urged to hasten passage of reform bills

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

KENYA'S tenth Parliament has been accused of dragging their feet in legislating and passing key bills geared towards creating reforms in the country.

Speaking recently during Bungoma County stakeholders' forum, the Regional Commissioner (RC) for Upper Western, Mr. Rashid Mohammed, said for the county to move forward reforms are necessary. Mohammed said reforms in the police service were paramount in enhancing the image and attitude of the police officers when fully implemented.

He urged Parliament to move with speed and enact the necessary legislations as stipulated in article 26(1) in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. Mohammed further challenged MPs to rise above parochial and personal issues and support the reform process as the implementation of the constitution requires a lot of unity, commitment and honesty. He said the reforms will enable Kenyans to enjoy the gains made in the 2010 Constitution in terms of peace, human dignity and responsible leadership.

Mohammed at the same time reprimanded political leaders in Bungoma County for being divisive during electioneering period.

He cautioned the masses in Bungoma County and especially the youth to be vigilant and refuse to be lured into groups arguing that such a move may spark off violence in the region.

The RC decried the attitude of Bungoma County people, saying that they have chosen to be idle instead of working on their farms to not only improve food security in the region but also their socio-economic status.

He consequently advised Bungoma county residents to elect leaders who can change people attitude and not leaders who perpetuate the culture of hand-outs. "With the devolved governance system you need to have leaders who can change people from being idle to hard working in order to generate revenue for both the county government and themselves," he said.

Mohammed asked Bungoma County residents to be conversant with both the national and county laws in order to keep their elected leaders under checks and balances.

The provincial administration admitted insecurity was rampant in Bungoma County and quickly blamed it on youth unemployment and poverty. "Let's call a spade a spade. Insecurity in Bungoma County is rampant and if not arrested it may scare away potential investors," he said.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

A KSh25 million water Testing and Hydraulic Laboratory has been opened at Kimathi University College of Technology in Nyeri County.

Higher Education minister Margaret Kamar officially opened the lab at the university. The lab has been constructed through the Economic Stimulus Programme.

The water laboratory is equipped with modern water testing equipment and the university is collaborating with water companies in Central Kenya region to better the lives of local residents. "Great inventions and technological advancements have been achieved by harnessing the water around us, be it for power generation, industrial cooling, processing, agriculture, domestic use and recycling of waste water among others. This laboratory therefore presents the first step towards beginning to discover the numerous ways water can be used, reused and processed to serve multiple purposes," the minister said after opening the laboratory.

She encouraged the university to work closely with the private sector by having their water tested at the laboratory on various aspects as they continue to provide quality water services to their customers.

Meanwhile, the minister said that Kenya is set to have its first University offering a full course in medical engineering in a move aimed at helping the country to develop its own medical equipment.

Kimathi University College of Technology, a constituent college of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), will soon be introducing a course in medical engineering, the first of its kind in the country that will focus on design and

Kamar opens new water lab at Kimathi University



Higher Education minister Margaret Kamar opens the Ksh25 million water Lab at Kimathi University. Consolidated Bank MD Wachira Ndegwa looks on. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

fabrication of hospital equipment.

Kimathi University College was selected to pioneer in medical engineering after it was identified as one of the premier tertiary institutions in the country by the ministry of Higher education.

"We have identified some premier institutions in the country and Kimathi is one of them since it covers a lot of technology fields and other areas which no other institutions focus on," said the minister.

Kimathi University College is also set to receive full university status before the end of the year along with two other institutions, the Kenya Polytechnic University College and the Mom-

basia Polytechnic University College.

Seven other institutions which include Kisii, Pwani, Laikipia, Chepkoilel, Meru and Taita Taveta University Colleges are also being inspected by the commission of higher education so as to receive full university status.

Rapid upgrading of the institutions has however raised concerns over the fate of technical and vocational training which was formerly carried out in most of these institutions.

The move is also meant to prepare the country to accommodate the largest group of Form Four leavers in 2015, who are the first beneficiaries of the free primary school education program.

The minister also noted that the government has closed down more than 90 bogus colleges throughout the country over the last two months with more than 40 principals being arrested.

The minister was accompanied by JKUAT chancellor Prof Francis Gichaga, the principal Ndirangu Kioni and Consolidated Bank MD Wachira Ndegwa among others.

Meanwhile, about 90 bogus colleges have been closed in the last two months, Higher Education Minister Margaret Kamar said recently.

The minister said 40 principals have also been arrested in the crackdown after the Government moved in to address the issue of the mushrooming colleges in the country. She said the Government had to swiftly move in following complaints on the mushrooming of commercial institutions. "We could not allow any substandard training since the country is best known for its high standards. We don't want to destroy the reputation of the country," she said.

Kamar was speaking at Kimathi University College of Technology in Nyeri County during the official opening of the Ksh25 million water laboratory. The minister was accompanied by the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology chancellor Prof Gichaga and Principal Ndirangu Kioni.

The minister at the same time admitted that there is a severe shortage of engineers in the country with only 6,000 of them but the Government has put up measures to ensure that they will have 30,000 engineers by year 2030 and also will add more technicians.

Kilifi teachers accused of inciting students

By BEKADZO TONDO

Kilifi secondary school teachers have been accused of instigating conflicts in their respective schools in order to push for the removal of their principals.

Kilifi District Education Officer Dickson ole Keis said teachers who are not happy with their principals incite students to go on strike to have their heads transferred.

"Some students say that teachers have been inciting them to

strike especially in cases where they want head teachers moved," said Keis.

Keis was speaking at Paradise Beach Resort at Kikambala, where he officially opened a one-day seminar that brought together board of governors and the chairmen of the parents' teachers associations in Kilifi District.

The workshop which had been organised by the Kilifi District Secondary School Heads Association was aimed at educating the BoG and

PTA chairmen on their core business at the schools.

The district education boss cited a case where students went on rampage after being incited by teachers to push for the removal of the school principal.

However, after investigations, it was discovered that some teachers wanted the principal transferred and thus used the students to attain their goal.

"Some teachers even ask students to boycott meals in order to protest

against poor quality citing embezzlement of school funds," said Keis.

Keis said the frequent strikes have made parents to incur losses as they are forced to meet the costs of repair. The trend is also to blame for the poor performance registered by most schools in the area in national examinations.

The DEO lamented that local schools performed dismally in last year's Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations.

Oparanya insists CDF will continue after devolution

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE Constituency Development Fund (CDF) will not be stopped, the National Planning and Vision 2030 Minister, Wycliffe Oparanya, has said.

Speaking in Bungoma Town recently, Oparanya dispelled fears that CDF will stop immediately the county governments become operational.

Oparanya, who was accompanied by Kanduyi MP Alfred Khangati, was categorical that CDF will not be discontinued as numerous development projects have been started at the

grassroots level.

"All areas whether politically correct or not are entitled to CDF allocation hence the government will be naive to do away with the fund," he said.

Oparanya hinted that CDF will be factored into this year's budget as usual and challenged Bungoma county residents to monitor and evaluate its usage.

He said for CDF to be used wisely in order to meet its intended purpose, citizens must be involved in identification, prioritisation and implemen-

tation of projects.

The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government under President Mwai Kibaki came to power in December 2002, on the platform of better governance than their predecessors.

Kibaki and his team promised Kenyans nearly everything they had allegedly missed during the four decades of one party rule; Kenya African National Union (KANU).

As one of the steps towards this goal, the CDF bill fronted by the then Olkalou MP Karue Muriuki was

passed by parliament in 2003.

The purpose of the CDF was and still is to address inequalities in development around the county. It is imperative to note that before the establishment of the CDF, development projects were taken to areas that were politically correct.

Today, constituents have however, used their CDF allocation to construct schools, health facilities, water projects and roads. In many constituencies, particularly those that were in opposition during the dictatorial and corrupt KANU regime, these projects

have been the first infrastructure improvements seen in years.

Implementation of the fund is guided by the CDF act of 2003 and the subsequent CDF amendment act of 2007 besides regulations and circulars released by the ministry of finance from time to time.

However, there are still concerns that CDF monies are not managed in a transparent manner; that many CDF projects are not useful to local communities; and that local communities are not sufficiently involved in its management.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

KIENI West leaders and provincial administration are worried by the rising number of suicide cases in the area.

The high rate of suicides recently prompted area DC Abdi Mohammed to convene a meeting with local leaders with the aim of finding a lasting solution and preventing more deaths.

The DC said at a meeting he had convened at Mweiga Township in Nyeri County that statistics indicate that 13 people from various locations in the district have committed suicide within the last six months.

"Most of these people have hanged themselves and just two have poisoned themselves. One of the young victims is a 21 years old girl who killed herself after performing dismally in her KCSE examination," said Mohammed.

The DC said it was after discovering the issue had become a social problem that he decided to convene a meeting with local leaders, the provincial administrators, church leaders and professional counselors.

He attributed the scenario to the breakdown of the family unit where parents have minimal time to talk to their children about issues in their lives.

"It has also been noted some of the elderly members of the society are despairing after been neglected by their children," he said.

Mohammed said though alcoholism could also be attributed to suicide cases in the society, there are other underlying issues that force people to turn to alcohol thinking they will get the consolation they need.

He said he would soon roll out a six weeks programme where he will

DC attributes suicides to family breakdowns



Kieni West leaders and provincial administration at a meeting. They are worried with the high rate of suicide in the area. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

together with local leaders hold public meetings in all the six locations to create awareness and come up with solu-

tions to the identified programmes.

During the meeting speaker after speaker cited high consumption of

brews, unemployment and desertion by family members as some of the factors that had resulted in the rise of

suicide cases in the area.

Simon Nguyo the chairman of Kieni West district peace committee said some cases of suicide have been fuelled by the high level of poverty in the area.

"This area is dry and drought sometimes persist leaving people without any form of income. When people are left with no work to do in their farms, they hang around shopping centers where some get involved in alcoholism and drug abuse," noted Nguyo.

He said the barazas would involve all in the society as the vice had been noted to cut across all ages adding family members should look for amicable ways of solving family disputes which disintegrate families leading to desperation.

Nyeri County Maendeleo Ya Wanawake chairperson Purity Ngunjiri said that most of youths were hopeless and spends most of their time in beer drinking a situation which had led them to committing suicide.

She said that although poverty was to blame most of suicide cases can be traced to feeling of emptiness among youths who fail to secure employment even after attaining high degrees and diplomas forcing them to retreat to villages where they become zombies due to drugs while other kill themselves.

Coast leaders to join MRC in fighting injustice

By BEKADZO TONDO

COAST leaders have vowed to support the activities of the outlawed Mombasa Republic Council (MRC) in their bid to seek justice if the government continues to perpetuate injustices against the coastal people.

The leaders took issue with a recent case where the Minister for Transport and Communication Amos Kimunya appointed most of the directors at the Kenya Ports Authority from one region at the expense of the coastal people.

About 42 civic leaders in Kilifi said MRC has been advocating for the secession of Coast region from the rest of the country due to the many historical injustices meted out on coastal people saying they will have no option but to join it.

The civic leaders said they were not happy with the way Kimunya appointed directors at the KPA and urged the Government to revoke the appointments.

Led by Teddy Mwambire, the civic leaders said they will not sit back to see their rights being trampled on by selfish leaders and demanded that the government revokes the appointments.

"Since KPA is located in Coast region, local people should be given 60 percent representation at the board and the remaining percentage to be given to people from other regions," Mwambire said.

Mwarakaya ward councilor Silas Mzungu, said the grievances levelled to the government as far as injustices to the coastal people were concerned was genuine and the government

should step in and address the problem.

"Members of MRC have been protesting over the historical injustices against the coastal people since the country attained independence and the government should come to our aid and address the problem or else area politicians will support their efforts," Dr Mzungu warned.

Fisheries Development Minister, Amason Kingi, who blew the whistle over the KPA appointments by Kimunya, has vowed to continue pressing on to have the list revoked.

Kingi said it was unfair for Kimunya to favour one region in the appointments and leave out coastal people where KPA is located.

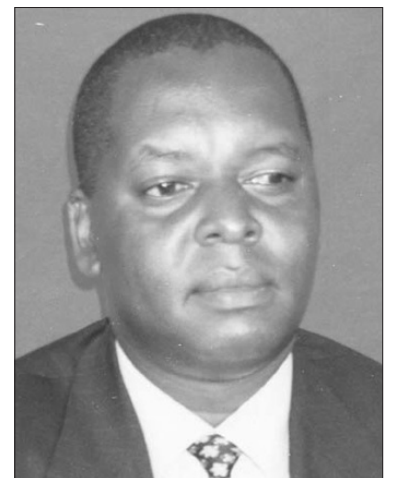
"As coast leaders, we will stand firm and demand for the rights of the coastal people and we are urging the

government to revoke the list of the appointed board directors at KPA a fresh appointments to be done and give coastal people and better representation at the board," said Kingi.

Dr Mzungu, however, cautioned MRC against telling coastal people to boycott the coming general elections as one of the measures to press for justice.

The civic leader said coast people needs political representation in both the county and central government and said the coastal people will be committing suicide if they fail to vote for their leaders.

"As far as MRC is advocating for the recognition of coastal people rights including land allocation, the idea of telling the people not vote in the coming general election is not a good idea as the people need to have



Mr. Kimunya

political representation in the government," Mzungu said.

NEMA rallies behind Green economy

By PETER MUTUKU

THE National Environment Management Authority (Nema) has embarked on a campaign that seeks to promote Green economy in the country to help reclaim depleted water sources.

Embu West District Environment Officer Joseph Kamau says the campaign aims at reducing over-reliance on firewood which he notes has been blamed for depletion of forest cover with about 5.6 million trees being cut every day.

Kamau says a series of exhibitions have been lined up to promote the planting of indigenous trees and demonstrate new ways to use natural resources without depleting the environment. "Through exhibitions we are encouraging Kenyans to adopt green initiatives like use of solar panels, bio gas, energy saving jikos and organic farming," he said appealing to the members of the public to attend the exhibitions and learn to do things differently.

He noted that on a daily basis Kenyans use natural resources hence getting them depleted thus the need to sensitize people to reverse the trend and save the situation from getting out of hand. The Eastern Provincial Director of Environment Stephen Njoka says about 30,000 indigenous trees are to be in the area in a bid to rehabilitate water catchment areas.

He says the rehabilitation program targets water catchment areas of Mutonga in Meru, Athi River, Tana River and Rwake in the lower Eastern which have been degraded by human activities. The director notes that the exercise will cost Ksh3 million and will seek to reclaim important environmental conservation areas.

Njoka says that NEMA plans to plant tree species that grow naturally along river beds like fig tree, ficus, prunes Africana and bamboo trees which he noted are very efficient in conserving catchments areas.

Karatina traders protest over stalled project

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MORE than 2,000 traders at the Karatina market in Mathira constituency are protesting against delays in the completion of Ksh 270 million Karatina market.

The traders are now calling upon the government to take ac-

tion against the contractor over delays which have seen them remain a temporary market where they were moved to leave room for the project.

The market traders led by their chairman Martin Ngatia Iregi said the state of the temporary market which has been

made worse by the rains that are pounding the country has left them without customers thus no money to support their families.

The chairman said customers were avoiding the market due to its poor drainage system that is causing flooding.

Karatina Municipal Council

Mayor Christopher Kamau accused the contractor of delaying completion of the project saying he has not given any reason over the six month delay.

He said the market which is set to cost Ksh270 million is scheduled for completion by the end of August this year but doubted the deadline will be realized since the contractor is just half way.

Kamau said he had petitioned the Ministry of Local Government over the delay and officials from the Ministry were conducting investigations on the delay.

Mathira Member of Parliament Ephraim Maina who toured the market threatened to institute legal action to compel the government to compensate traders at the market saying they had incurred numerous losses for lack of customers at the temporary market.

Maina who said the contractor had delayed the project for six months urged the government to take action against the contractor for breaching the contract terms.

"I will raise the issue in Parliament to seek an answer from the Minister of Local Government since I had been promised by former Minister Musalia Mudavadi the market would be completed on time," he said.

The MP asked the Karatina Municipal Council to use the money collected from the traders to improve the state of the drainage system in the temporary market to ensure business goes on as usual.

Efforts to get a comment from the contractor were fruitless as we didn't get him on site.



The uncompleted Sh 270 million Karatina market.

Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

LEADERS from Nyeri County have expressed concern over what they term as lack of awareness on the provision of the Political Parties' Act and the Elections Act amongst residents in the area.

The leaders who were speaking at a forum organised by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) said many Kenyans were unaware of the provisions of the two Acts saying the electoral body should thus embark on a massive voter education campaign before the coming general elections.

Leaders decry lack of awareness of crucial Acts

"It is evident most people do not know what these laws require of them. It has emerged from this forum that even some of the leaders do not know what the two Acts state," Mwangi Njururi, an aspirant for the post of Governor said.

He said the IEBC should avail documents detailing the provisions of these Acts to Kenyans so that they can read and understand them.

Njururi said Kenyans also need to be educated on the roles of the various positions created by the new constitution under the County government not-

ing many of them could not differentiate between the roles of the Governor and the Senator. "This kind of awareness and education will help Kenyans elect good leaders who can uplift their livelihoods once the elections come," he said.

Nyeri County GNU party chairman Samuel Wamathai said candidates aspiring to vie for various seats will have to contend with the requirements of the act to maintain peace and conduct their campaigns in a peaceful manner.

Wamathai said the law barring aspiring candidates from participating in har-

ambes would help offer a level playing field for all candidates irrespective of the amount of money they have.

"Some politicians may want to use money to influence the voters, but the law does not allow it. Those who bank on bribing the voters will be apprehended," said Wamathai. The Nyeri Town parliamentary seat aspirant said the law would also enable politicians to conduct their campaigns without spreading hatred or insulting their opponents.

"The law aims to ensure politics is based on issues other than hate speech

which all of us know resulted in the violence that rocked the country after the year 2007 elections," he concluded.

Nyeri County Council chairman Wachira Maina Keen, Nyeri PNU alliance chairman Mureithi Ndegwa, ex-mayor Wanyaga Gathaka and Nyeri deputy mayor Grace Wanyeki were among other political leaders present.

The forum was attended by local leaders drawn from various groups including the youth, women special groups and church leaders.

Tension mounting over Kilifi coal project

By BEKADZO TONDO

A CHIEF'S camp at Ngerenya location in Kilifi where over 80 families are opposed to plans by the government to put up a coal plant project was nearly set ablaze by unknown people.

The plot to torch the Zowerani assistant Chiefs office was mooted just hours after the residents staged a peaceful procession for about 10 kil-

ometers to Kilifi DC's office where they vowed to reject plans to put up the project without involving them.

Zowerani assistant chief Ms Tackla Chai said: "I came as usual to my office, but when I opened the door, I found the curtains burnt and some black spots were on the walls," Chief Chai said.

"The arsonist seems to have come at night and attempted to burn the office soon after the area residents held

demonstration to Kilifi DC Benjamin Wachira to protest over the planned coal electricity generation project," she said.

However, Kilifi acting OCS, James Maina, who visited the office in the company of Bahari DO, Florence Sitawa described the attempted burning of the chiefs' office as an act of hooliganism.

"This is an act of hooliganism and will track down the suspects and

charge them in court for attempted arson," said Maina.

The police officer said he will deploy some police officers to raid all the Mnazi drinking dens in the area in an effort to get the suspects.

DO Sitawa condemned the act of burning of the chiefs' office and urged local leaders to educate their people on the importance of maintaining peace and order.

"Illiteracy among area people

should be blamed for the acts of hooliganism and it's the duty of leaders to sensitize their people on the importance of getting education" said Sitawa.

Residents led by Gambo Mwambeni have been opposed to the taking of their land for the generation of electricity through the use of coal. According to him, he was not involved when the project was planned.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

Let's all join hands for the environment

In observance of World Environment Day (Month) and the upcoming Rio+20 international discussion on green economy, The Link urges international policymakers to consider the role plant science innovations can play in enabling sustainable agriculture.

Plant science innovations have played a significant role in supporting agricultural development worldwide, which in turn has enabled economic development for local, regional, and national governments and communities, while at the same time protecting natural habitats and conserving precious resources.

Plant science products have provided incredible improvements in how farmers protect crops against pests and diseases. Since the first Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 farmers have embraced plant science as a way to protect their land for their children and future generations while feeding their communities.

Determining how to share these sustainable practices with more farmers will be a crucial step for developing a green economy framework at the Rio+20 Earth Summit.

By increasing crop production, these technologies decrease the need to expand farmland. In fact, massive gains in agricultural productivity in the past 50 years have saved a landmass the size of North America from conversion into farmland.

About 30-60 per cent of these increases are credited to improved crop varieties through plant breeding. From 1996 to 2009 alone, biotech crops worldwide prevented 75 million hectares of land from being used for farming.

At Rio+20, nations will create a green economy by charting a path for the globe to reduce poverty while protecting the environment in coming decades, and agriculture will be a significant factor. Examining how farmers are protecting the environment and conserving resources right now provides an opportunity for negotiations to build on demonstrated success.

Recent studies measuring agriculture's environmental footprint indicate that modern farming has become more sustainable due to improved technology. A 2011 report found that Brazilian farmers who adopted biotech crops have reduced their carbon emissions by 357,000 tons since 1996 – the equivalent of planting an extra 2.6 million trees in the rainforest.

Another initiative, Field to Market, discovered that, through the use of modern farming practices, U.S. soybean farmers have cut the energy required to grow an acre of soybeans by two-thirds compared to 20 years ago.

With nearly 75 million acres of soybeans planted last year, this is a significant savings for U.S. natural resources. Expanding the global use of these practices and technologies could make agriculture a key contributor to a green economy.

As global leaders prepare for discussions that will chart the course for sustainable development in the coming decades, nations, including Kenya, must look at what has been successful since the first Rio conference in 1992. In the past 20 years, farmers have significantly reduced their carbon footprint while feeding a population that has risen by 1.5 billion. With the help of better crop protection and plant biotechnology, farmers will be able to create a green economy in agriculture today, and improving access to these tools will be critical to maintaining it in the future.



COMMENTARY

Health workers in bid to curb maternal deaths

KENYANS can now seek legal redress for preventable maternal deaths.

The Chairman of the National Nurses Association of Kenya (NNAK), Mr. Luke KoDambo who is also the Project Coordinator at the Reproductive Health Rights Alliance (RHRA) says that aggrieved parties can now seek justice in court. "If a mother comes to the hospital with pregnancy related complications and care is delayed, the trained health professional will be held accountable as outlined in the Constitution," he adds.

KoDambo says that access to maternal health care and reproductive health rights as enshrined in the Constitution must be fully safeguarded.

The Chairman notes that the rate of maternal deaths in the country are worrying with official figures indicating that approximately 8,000 women die every year due to complications arising from pregnancy and child bearing. Unsafe abortion accounts for 2,600 of these deaths both in public and private health institutions.

Dr Joachim Osur who is the Director of Africa Alliance Programs (Ipas) shares similar sentiments.

He says that health workers and the government must now brace themselves for more public interest litigations in the future if the current state of maternal health remains the same.

Dr. Osur says that health workers can no longer deny people contraceptives for cultural or religious reasons so long as it is within their professional scope of practice as provided by an Act of Parliament.

"It is no longer a privilege to avail sexual and reproductive health services, citizens can seek redress if they feel their right to health has been violated," he notes during the 17TH Midwives Scientific Conference held in Kakamega town.

The Constitution (Article 43(2)) is explicit and provides that "A person shall not be denied emergency medical treatment."

Further Article 26(4) of the Constitution provides that when "in the opinion of a trained health professional, there is need for emergency treatment, or the life or health of the mother is in danger or if permitted by any other written law".

COMMENT

By FAITH MUIRURI

Dr Osur says that failure to provide services that are legal will now attract penalties and calls on health workers to familiarize themselves with the law to avoid committing violations.

Dr Osur says that deaths from unsafe abortion are preventable and thus the need to face the problem and solve it.

"The spirit of the new constitution is that the 2600 deaths of women undergoing unsafe abortion need to be averted. Unless this touchy issue is addressed, the achievement of MDG 5 and other related goals of maternal health will remain elusive."

"Citizens must also be empowered and facilitated to demand for better health services. The article on emergency treatment falls in the Bill of Rights and Citizens can take action if leaders fail to," he adds.

Other factors that can impede the quality of care include poor roads, shortage of staff, burnout, long working hours and deep seated cultural beliefs surrounding pregnancy and childbirth especially in Coast and Western Kenya.

The Nurses Association is currently supporting, the Nursing Council of Kenya to align its codes and scope of practice within the constitutional provisions, like other health regulatory bodies.

Lucia Buyanza who is a senior official with NNAK at the same time says that the Ministry of Health is moving towards embracing the Comprehensive Abortion Care (CAC) which she lays emphasis on preventive measures such as abstinence, family life education and provision of other safety options.

"We are not going to wait for women to come to hospitals with pregnancy related complications. Instead we will reach out to them at the village level and sensitize them on their reproductive health rights that include the right to decide freely and responsibly on the number, spacing and timing of their children and to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health," he adds.

Currently Post Abortion Care (PAC) is legal in government facilities but very expensive. It is estimated that the government spends Ksh 18 million annually, in Post Abortion Care given to women with complications arising from unsafe abortion by quacks or in an environment lacking minimal sanitary and medical standards.

Dr Osur however notes that although PAC is legal in government hospitals, most health facilities in the country do not have trained personnel to perform the operation.

"Up to 50 percent of health facilities in the country lack the capacity to provide PAC, thus leaving room for quacks and herbalists to take charge," he laments.

Dr Osur says that in some instances women have to walk for long distances before they can access health facilities.

"This means that majority of these women die from complications that can effectively be treated in a health system that has adequate skilled personnel, a functioning referral system and can respond to obstetric emergencies when they occur," he affirms.

The doctor is however optimistic that once the County Governments become operational, such services will be managed at county level.

"This will help reduce sexual and reproductive health disparities across the country. We will have no reason any more to say Nairobi and Central provinces have political privileges," he intimates.

Dr Osur says that the government must guarantee access and quality health care to all its citizens through adequate financing in line with the Abuja Declaration which requires that government commits 15 percent of its revenue to health to help address staff shortages and provide equipment and supplies in a safe health environment.

Reproductive Health Rights Alliance (RHRA) and IPAS are among organizations that seek to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity in Kenya. The two organizations are engaged in building nurses and midwives capacity on Constitutional provisions in the reproductive health care. The RHRA has enabled the service providers to uphold the reproductive health of women holistically.



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Rectify the census error, Oparanya told

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

MEMBERS of Busia County Civil Society want the Commission on Revenue Allocation to earmark an additional Ksh700 million to the County as the Census report which formed the basis of the initial allocation was erroneous and did not reflect the population on the ground.

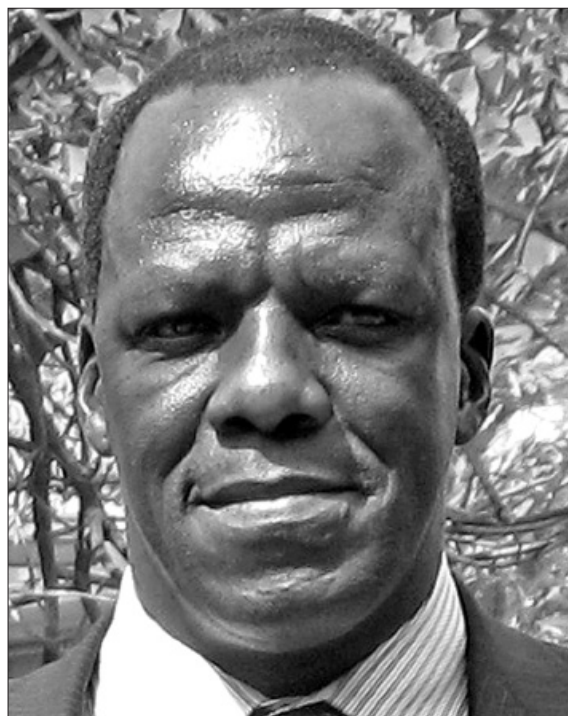
Addressing the civil society members during a one day sensitization forum held at Western Ambience hotel at Bumala in Butula district recently, the Dialogue Africa representative Gideon Ochanda said that Amagoro Constituency with a population of 256,000 people has erroneously been moved to Bungoma County, thus presenting a major challenge to the socio-economic growth for Busia County.

"The Minister for Planning Wycliff Oparanya must move with speed and de-gazette the population of Busia. This will help empower the Kenya Bureau of Statistics to give the correct population of Busia," said Ochanda, adding that if the error is not corrected and left as it is, it will affect those vying for the senate.

On the controversial election date, Dialogue Africa chairman said people had taken boundary issues to court so if the court says there was error then election cannot be held in December, adding that if the court is progressive enough then the whole thing will be nullified.

He urged the people to read the constitution so that they can understand its content to avoid being misled by politicians who may take advantage of their ignorance.

Ochanda supported the move by the Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to balance population figures in respective electoral units saying the commission must bridge disparities in different areas.



Mr. Oparanya

"The law allows for a variation of 10percent in the population distribution of a place," says ochanda, adding that each ward should have a population of 26,000 people whereas a constituency should have a population of 133,000.

He at the same time said that a total of 96 boundary cases have been taken to court but have been merged into one.

"Election is supposed to be done after every five years and thus there is no cause for alarm with the March 2013 dates," he said, adding that Kenyans must elect visionary leaders who can deliver," said Ochanda.

He at the same time underscored the need to set up vetting committees that will help scruti-

nise all those aspiring to contest for various elective posts during the general elections.

Members of the civil society organization drawn from Busia County's seven districts namely Samia, Butula, Bunyala, Nambale, Busia, Teso South and Teso North complained about the delay in the issuance of national Identification Cards.

"Majority of youth in Busia County are yet to be issued with identification cards yet they had applied for the same several months ago," they said, adding that some provincial administrators are to blame for the delays in the issuance of the identification cards.

They said that women are the hardest hit as some are foreigners



Mr. Ochanda

married in the country.

Ochanda, however explained that the constitution allows for dual citizenship adding that a spouse from a foreign country should not be denied an identification card just because she is not from Kenya.

On CDF bursary, the members of the civil society faulted the manner in which the CDF bursary committees from the respective constituencies were handling the disbursement of bursary to needy cases.

"Only the sons and daughters of people closer to the MPs are awarded good money but majority of needy cases are either given little or no money at all," they said, adding MPs should not be allowed to handle CDF.

Leaders decry lack of awareness of crucial Acts

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

LEADERS from Nyeri County have expressed concern over what they term as lack of awareness on the provision of the Political Parties' Act and the Elections Act amongst residents in the area.

The leaders who were speaking at a forum organised by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) said many Kenyans were unaware of the provisions of the two Acts saying the electoral body should thus embark on a massive voter education campaign before the coming general elections.

"It is evident most people do not know what these laws require of them. It has emerged from this forum that even some of the leaders do not know what the two Acts state," Mwangi Njururi, an aspirant for the post of Governor said.

He said the IEBC should avail documents detailing the provisions

of these Acts to Kenyans so that they can read and understand them.

Njururi said Kenyans also need to be educated on the roles of the various positions created by the new constitution under the County government noting many of them could not differentiate between the roles of the Governor and the Senator.

"This kind of awareness and education will help Kenyans elect good leaders who can uplift their livelihoods once the elections come," he said.

Nyeri County GNU party chairman Samuel Wamathai said candidates aspiring to vie for various seats will have to contend with the requirements of the act to maintain peace and conduct their campaigns in a peaceful manner.

Wamathai said the law barring aspiring candidates from participating in harambees would help offer a level playing field for all candidates irrespective of the amount of money they have.

"Some politicians may want to use money to influence the voters, but the law does not allow it. Those who bank on bribing the voters will be apprehended," said Wamathai.

The Nyeri Town parliamentary seat aspirant said the law would also enable politicians to conduct their campaigns without spreading hatred or insulting their opponents.

"The law aims to ensure politics is based on issues other than hate speech which all of us know resulted in the violence that rocked the country after the year 2007 elections," he concluded.

Nyeri County Council chairman Wachira Maina Keen, Nyeri PNU alliance chairman Mureithi Ndegwa, ex-mayor Wanyaga Gathaka and Nyeri deputy mayor Grace Wanyeki were among other political leaders present.

The forum was attended by local leaders drawn from various groups including the youth, women special groups and church leaders.

Kisii youth advised on voting

By BOB OMBATI

KISII county 'Yes Youth can' programme chairman, Dennis Orioki urged youths to obtain Identity cards to participate in the elections.

Orioki told The Link, it would be difficult for the youths who form the bulk of the population to elect their leaders without the IDs.

The official urged the government to decentralize registration services at the sub-locational level to enable those attaining the required age to acquire the documents easily instead of travelling to far-flung district headquarters to get them.

He said youth who had attained the age of 18 have a right to get the ID cards without being subjected to a rigorous process which may force them to give up and urged provincial administrators and Registration officers to aid them.

Gender ministry launches child protection services

By HENRY OWINO

MILLIONS of children the world over continue to be victims of violence and exploitation in the home, at school or within their community, the very settings that are supposed to provide a protective environment for them.

Kenya has made significant strides in addressing obstacles that stand in the way of full realization of child rights. For instance; development of specific policies and programmes to address specific rights, such as, the provision of free and compulsory primary education to all children, the Cash Transfer Programme to assist orphans and vulnerable children among others.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development in collaboration with National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) has established a Framework for National Child Protection System for Kenya as a product of concerted efforts and substantive contributions among many.

The Child Protection System is a set of laws, policies, regulations and services, capacities, monitoring and oversight needed across all social sectors to prevent and respond to protection-related risks. Its goals are to support and strengthen families to reduce social exclusion and to lower risk of separation, violence and exploitation.

In Kenya's Constitution, an individual who has not attained the age of eighteen years is regarded as a child. The country has made significant strides in addressing obstacles that stand in the way of full realization of child rights.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) have largely been domesticated and incorporated into Kenyan law mainly through the Children Act of 2001 and now the Constitution. The current Constitution of Kenya 2010, therefore, ushered a new era for child rights by making special provisions for children.

For instance; Chapter four of the Bill of Rights states that 'the State shall enact and implement legislation to fulfill its international obligations in respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In addition, section 53 of the new constitution is specific to children, a plus for Kenya, as children's rights were not mentioned anywhere in the previous constitution.

The remarks were made by Ambassador Franklins Esipilla who represented permanent secretary, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development

during the official launch of the framework for Kenya at a hotel in Nairobi.

Amb. Esipilla said according to the African report on Child well-being, Kenya was placed sixth as the most child-friendly in all African governments. She pointed out first reason was for putting in place appropriate legal provisions to protect children against abuse and exploitation, secondly for commitment to allocating a relatively higher share of national budget to provide for the needs of children and thirdly for achieving relatively favorable well-being outcomes for children.

Esipilla however expressed her concerns that in spite of the various interventions and strategies by the government, civil society and faith based organizations and private sectors; children in Kenya continue to be exposed to challenging situations in the social, economic, cultural and political arena against the international human rights legal framework.

"Statistically, 2.5 million children are orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs). About 900 million are in child labour including the street children, one million are out of school. The 2008 post election crisis, and persistent cycle of drought, climate change, the global financial slowdown and the rising food prices have exacerbated the vulnerability of children in Kenya," narrated Esipilla.

Esipilla, who was guest of honour, reminded the public that Child Protection System is everyone's business including National and Regional governments, Civil Society, the Communities, families, private sector and children to address child protection concerns.

"Let us all use the national toll free helpline 116 to report all cases of child abuse. This way, we shall reduce if not end children's rights abuse in the country," pleaded Esipilla.

Hellen Waweru, the chairperson, NCCS, said the Child Protection is a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary affair that requires involvement of everyone. She emphasized this considering that over half of the population of Kenya is constituted by children some of who live in different situations of vulnerability.

"It is vital that Kenya has an effective and functional child protection system which is guided by framework. The overall purpose of any child protection system is to promote the well-being of children through prevention of violence and exploitation, ensuring that in case it happens, prompt and coordinated action is taken to prevent further occurrence," Waweru explained.

Waweru illustrated, according to the violence report by the United Nations 2006 more than 200 million children have been sexually abused and almost 300 million have witnessed domestic

violence. She added it is very disheartening to note that the adults, who are supposed to be protective to children, are in the centre of violating their rights.

Waweru regretted that concerted efforts in addressing the challenges are adversely affecting the children growth and development despite government and stakeholders efforts various measures aimed at enhancing child care and protection.

"In spite of the noble efforts, children still remain victims of neglect, trafficking, and child labour, child poverty, adononment, heading households, internal and external displacement among other evils that traumatize them," Waweru lamented. Most towns in Africa, children are being abused by adults to beg money and food in the streets from people, overworked thus child labour, forced to marriage others for commercial sex in night clubs.

The framework objectives is aimed at addressing the plight of children by; defining the roles and functions of all stakeholders in child protection, provide a framework as a reference for a child protection in Kenya facilitate effective coordination in the provision of child protection services and facilitate reviewing and enacting of appropriate and effective legislation and policies, capacities and resources to effectively address issues of children.



Kibera Children's Rescue Centre. Children world over continue to be victims of violence and exploitation in the home.

Soaring crime rate in Nambale alarms residents

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

NAMBALE District lacks a police station and residents have to walk for more than 20 kilometers to access services at Busia police station.

The District is served by a police patrol base which operates without a vehicle to respond to emergencies.

Residents led by Mr Callistus Aleri, a prominent businessman in the area, say that they have to contend with the high rate of criminal activities in the area which they blame on the absence of a police station.

Aleri says the situation has been aggravated by corruption on the part of some police officers who have been colluding with criminal gangs to unleash terror in the area.

"Some police officers have been colluding with criminal gangs operating in the area. It is for this reason that the level of crime has reached an alarming level," he says.

He calls for called for the establishment of a police station in the area to curb increased cases of insecurity in the district.

"It is high time a full-fledged police station is established in Nambale and adequate personnel deployed in order to curb rising cases of insecurity," adds Aleri who plans to contest for the Nambale parliamentary seat on a Nar-Kenya ticket.

The aspirant says that Nambale residents have been living in fear of being ambushed by criminal gangs who have been engaged in a spate of robberies and killing of innocent people. "Life is precious and the government should employ all means at its disposal to ensure people are totally protected from the ruthless criminal gangs who have been operating with impunity," he adds.

He said that Nambale Town Council has already set aside a three-quarter parcel of land that will be used for the establishment of the police station adding that the government should appreciate the gesture and support the project.

Several victims and the residents of Nambale at large interviewed by The Link said should the government fail to respond to their call, they will have no alternative but to take the law into their own hands and lynch the criminals.

"We have suffered a great deal from the hands of these ruthless criminal gangs. But we shall be forced to take the law into our own hands and lynch them," said the irate residents, adding that their pleas had always fallen on deaf ears.

IEBC launches civic education in Bondo

By JOHNN NYAMBUNE

CIVIC Education has been launched in Bondo Constituency as the country prepares for the general election under the devolved system of government.

Bondo Constituency Electoral coordinator, Rose Obari, says the exercise aims at educating people on the six ballot election and identifying any challenges that the commission may face during the general election.

Obari says the mock exercises held in Kajiado North and Lamu constituencies have been incorporated in the programme to enable the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to come up with solutions ahead of the polls in order to hold smooth and credible elections.

During this exercise, voters expressed fears about what the commission says and what the law states on the election date.

However, Obari said the commission was within the law to set the March 4, 2013 general elections date arguing that the activities prior to the election could not allow the polls to be conducted this year. "The commission respects the rule of law and therefore decided to have the elections held on March 4, 2013 as it was passed by the court," she explains.

According to the Commission, the two constituencies (Kajiado North and Malindi) were selected due to their rural and urban features, which will be used to determine the time taken to cast the vote by a rural and an urban voter.

Addressing the voters, West Yimbo Development Committee chairman, Samson Osanya said the elections will be held in two days. "I do suggest that the elections be held in two days because this time round, we will be voting six positions and this

will hence take a lot of time. If we can have the presidential election held on day one and the other positions on the following day," suggested Osanya.

As the country prepares for the polls, there is fear among the disabled in Bondo according to Dorsila Adhiambo Okoth. "Going by what happened during the ODM grassroots elections, we fear that the worst might happen for the disabled," she says.

"We need security to protect us from harassment and mistreatment by some rowdy youths hired by some politicians. If this can't be taken into consideration, then we aren't going to participate in the elections," she says.

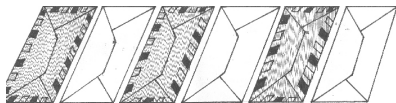
However, Obari urged party leaders to ensure that they intensify security during party elections in order to avoid disillusionment and violence. "Although the Commission has no responsibility of conducting party elections, I urge our political leaders to

make sure that their elections are free and fair," she says.

However, the biggest hurdle that Obari cited is the acquisition of identity cards and voter registration in Bondo district. She says most people register as voters but hardly cast their votes on the election day.

"We have been experiencing a challenge because most of the voters are fishermen and therefore goes on fishing expedition on the Election Day," she said. Elsewhere, Yimbo West location acting Chief Manasseh Osuri is appealing to those who have not collected their identity cards to so since this is the only way that they register as voters.

"We have many uncollected identity cards in our office and we are therefore going to conduct door-to-door inspection to identify those who have not collected their cards," he warned.



The Chief Justice should oppose same sex unions

DR WILLY Mutunga's suggestion that the Supreme Court settle the question of what the Constitution says about same sex marriage is worrying.

In his remarks at the forum on the rules of the top court, the Chief Justice said the Supreme Court, if asked, would interpret correctly what the law says on gay rights. He described ongoing public debate on the matter as "healthy", and "encouraging". This matter, however, does not need interpretation.

If there are loopholes in the law that may allow practices that threaten the moral fibre of society, Dr. Mutunga should have spoken up during the Constitution making process.

The majority of Kenyans were unanimous in demanding clauses in the Constitution that excluded gay marriages. Kenya is a predominantly Christian and Muslim country.

Both religious believe in the final authority of the Holy Quran and the Holy Bible to guide them in matters of faith and life.

Why would Mutunga be "encouraged" by discussions that seek to overthrow the authorities of the holy books?

Laws are made by Parliament on behalf of the people and no court is greater than its maker.

It is morally unacceptable for anyone to urge Kenyans to seek the intervention of the court in matters the public considers unnatural. Naturally, every adult human being has a sexual orientation.

But this does not mean we should advocate for same sex marriages. Let us draw the line between what is acceptable and what is not, before things go out of control.

* * *

IN a suit filed in US Federal Court, Pastor Scott Lively is charged with violation of the international law of 'Crimes Against Humanity of Persecution' for preaching against homosexuality in Uganda.

There seems to be an evil intention on the part of homosexual movement to pervert the law of natural justice in order to fulfill their lustful desires. The Bible speaks against this behaviour as it negates the purpose of God in multiplying and replenishing the earth.

Pastor Lively's freedom to publish and rebuke openly those who sin is enshrined in both secular and divine laws.

Since the institutions of world governments are ordained by God, their constitutions must also respect His divine laws.

We exhort Pastor Scott not to be discouraged by baseless and ungodly lawsuits and instead press on with his divine crusade against ungodliness. Humanity without posterity is potentially extinct.

Concerned Kenyans,
Via e-mail.

Set up teams to establish causes of accidents and find a solution

IT IS time Kenya comes up with lasting solutions to road accidents that have claimed many lives and maimed others.

We no longer need to merely talk and engage in blame games when we know very well that accidents have become a daily occurrence, whose consequences are permanent and irreversible.

Shouting and blaming each other will not help bring the carnage to an end but will worsen the situation.

We need to appreciate the fact that accidents are not acts of God. We need to appreciate the fact that accidents are not acts of God. We should desist from blaming God for our own acts of commission or omission.

To address a problem effectively, it is important to be fully acquainted with the cause first.

We need to get to the root causes of the road accidents. It is after understanding the causes that we can look for practical solutions.

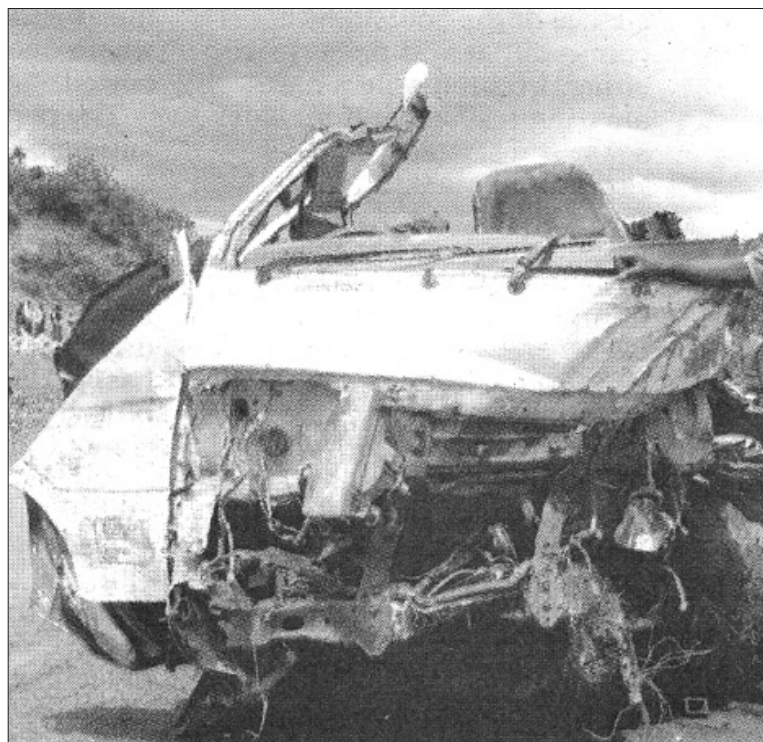
In order to identify and categorise the causes, the government should engage two competent teams.

One will be charged with the task of conducting a research to identify and categorise the causes.

The other one will be responsible for coming up with practical solutions.

The government should form the second team in consultation with all stakeholders. It should be made up of eminent persons of high integrity. I am suggesting this because not everybody mourns when an accident occurs.

There are business people whose livelihoods depend on ac-



The wreckage of a matatu that was involved in an accident at Karigu-ini on the Kenol-Murang'a road. Fourteen people died on the accident. Photo/File

cidents. More accidents mean more business for them. Those who provide breakdown services, garages, hospitals and morgues are examples. This, however, is not to say that they do not offer crucial services.

When the first team completes the research, it should hand over its findings to the second one.

The need to curb the road carnage is long overdue and further blame games or inaction either by the government or the public are unacceptable.

We need to act now.

Imposing huge penalties on

traffic offenders in order to curb the carnage is just but a half-baked measure that will not translate into meaningful gains.

What we need is a comprehensive approach.

I support the point made by Mutuma Mathiu in his article 'Here's my well-considered five-year plan on how to reduce road carnage' that appeared in one of the dailies on May 18, 2012 that an authority to manage road safety should be established through an Act of Parliament.

David Ndegwa,
via e-mail.



Let all Kenyans cast their votes!

THE right to vote for all citizens has been recognised, acknowledged and accepted by nations worldwide. It is to be found in various international legal instruments and covenants.

The new Constitution strives to accommodate dual and multiple citizens. Their fellow kinsmen who are also citizens of other countries now have an opportunity to enjoy this right.

They are thus a welcome addition to the other Kenyans who have enjoyed this right in the past, as well as those living in Kenya who have only recently qualified to vote. Thus the Diaspora vote is of the same status in legal recognition as that of all citizens living in Kenya.

The police, the National Youth Service, game wardens and forest guards, patients in hospitals, remand prisoners, serving prisoners, a large section of the military and travelling Kenyans do not vote for various reasons.

The reasons these voters cannot be facilitated to vote have been loudly voiced by politicians. Some of the reasons are real, and some imagined.

A number cite inadequate financial resources and lack of knowledge as part of the reasons involved.

Politicians have always suspected that, the election authorities and their officials would be misused by their opponents to their detriment, if these Kenyans are allowed to vote.

The authorities, being aware of this attitude, have not found it necessary to carry out an audit of the problems and solutions that need to be confronted, and put in place mechanisms for these Kenyans to enjoy their rights.

Kenya now boasts of an independent electoral commission. Why then should there be talk that if vote registration and polling takes place in the embassies and consulates, fraud is likely to occur? Does the politician want us to believe he has to be always present in such places to monitor the electoral voting and counting exercise?

It as is the case, he relies on his agents, why is it impossible for him to place his agents at these embassies? Granted, the voters will be Kenyans, and it cannot be argued that none would accept to be used.

Meanwhile, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission should register the Diaspora voters and facilitate their voting. It has all the resources it needs, time included.

What remains is the goodwill to push forth a very deserving agenda.

Samuel Kivuitu,
Via e-mail.



The editor welcomes letters and comments on a variety of issues. The letters should be brief, topical and issue based.

The editor reserves the right to edit for brevity or clarity.

Write to:

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Revoke appointments - FIDA tells Kibaki

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya (FIDA) has faulted President Mwai Kibaki's appointment of 47 county commissioners and demanded that the exercise be revoked citing gender imbalance.

In a press statement faxed to newsrooms, the association said that the appointments negated the spirit of the new constitution, which requires that one third of any appointment be from the other gender.

"The appointments do not meet the threshold stipulated in our Constitution and utterly violate Article 27 (8) with regard to ensuring that not more than two thirds of the appointments made were of persons of the same gender," read the statement in part.

The media release, which was signed by FIDA Kenya Chair Ruth Aura, noted that the appointments have contravened the national values and principles of governance, particularly the principle of equality as enshrined under Article 10 of the Constitution.

"Our government has committed to uphold our Constitution and to uphold the gender parity principle enshrined under Article 4(L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union," added Aura terming the appointments as a gross violation of the Constitution.

She said the action by the President is demeaning to not just Kenyan women, but to those in the entire African continent given that the African Women's Decade was launched in Kenya, an indication that our government is committed to promotion and empowerment of women in line with the themes of the Decade.



President Kibaki

The women's rights body wants the appointments by the President annulled and fresh appointments be made in line with the principles espoused in the constitution.

"We therefore demand that the President revoke the appointments and follow the criteria set out in the Constitution failure to which FIDA Kenya will take appropriate action to remedy this injustice," Aura said.

Only 11 women were appointed out of the 47 available county positions. A third of this translates to at least 15 commissioners and thus contravenes gender provisions in the constitution.

The appointments have also drawn criticism from other circles, with Kenya's Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, saying he was not consulted by the President while making the appointments that are also supposed to reflect representation of persons with disabilities.

Nyeri leaders tip women on top seats

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI Women representative aspirant Priscilla Nyokabi has urged women to support their fellow women in order for them to clinch top seats in the country.

Nyokabi, who is the *Kitua Cha Sheria* Executive Director, said it is time for the women who are majority in the country to stand and support their fellow women in order for them to also win most of the county seats.

She said it is time for women to join political seats as contained in the new constitution.

The aspirant said she will ensure agriculture sector receives a boost in the county, if elected for the post in order to create more employment. "I shall ensure we sell branded and processed tea, coffee and dairy products everywhere including in all counties and internationally to ensure creation of more jobs," she said.

Nyokabi said if the agricultural products are exported to other markets in Europe and Africa, this will help to boost income for the local farmers. "Nyeri County should establish its Konza like ICT city and explore partnerships with other ICT hubs in United States and other places. We can start with local universities," she added.

She was speaking at Gathumbi Secondary School during a funds drive in aid of the school which was attended by President Mwai Kibaki son Jimmy. "We also want all people to join National Hospital Insurance Fund scheme to enable them to benefit in time of sickness," she added. Dr



Ms. Nyokabi, *Kitua Cha Sheria* Executive Director

Gakuru Wahome, an aspirant for Nyeri Governor, who was also present during the function, said he ready to work for the Nyeri people if elected for the seat.

He also urged the Nyeri people to respect President Kibaki before and after retirement. KPLC director Esau Kioni was also present during the function.

Millions returned amidst grinding poverty

By BEKADZO TONDO

TENS of thousands of shillings allocated to different government ministries to implement community development projects in Kilifi district are annually returned to the treasury due to under utilisation.

Kilifi District Commissioner, Benjamin Wachira, blamed the heads of department in the area for not involving the residents in implementation of the projects for the return of the development funds.

"I have come to discover that some heads of departments in this district do not go out and inform local leaders and the members of the public on development projects their ministries are supposed to undertake something which had resulted to return of millions of money to the treasury," Wachira

Wachira was reacting to an issue where over Ksh5.5 million budgeted to start fish pond projects in Bahari constituency under the economic stimulus program were last year returned to the treasury after the department of fisheries development in Kilifi failed to make use of them.

According to the minister for fisheries development Amason Kingi, his ministry had budgeted Ksh6 million for the implementation of the fish

pond farming project in each of the six constituencies in Kilifi County.

Kingi who had paid a courtesy call to DC Wachira before he left to the field to inspect the projects got shocked to learn that out of 300 fish ponds which had been planned for construction in Bahari constituency it was only 80 ponds which had been done. Minister Kingi said his ministry had budgeted Ksh25,000 for the construction of each fish pond where the 300 ponds were to cost Ksh6 million but it was only about Ksh 4 million which was spent leaving the rest to be returned.

"The government initiated the fish pond farming project through the economic stimulus program to improve the economy of the people and its sad to learn that some officers are sabotaging the government development policies by failing to implement its programs," said Kingi.

Kilifi District Fisheries Officer Nemwel Onchonga defended himself against the returned money claiming that soils found in Bahari constituency were rocky while others were so porous that they could not hold water thus making it difficult to have more fish ponds in the area.

Onchonga further castigated land disputes among area people and lack of water sources for the failure to put

the 300 fish ponds which had been planned to be constructed in Bahari Constituency.

"In Kilifi we got so many challenges like land ownership problems, lack water sources and poor soils to construct ponds and those are some of the problems which made us as ministry to fail to meet the 300 ponds in Bahari," Onchonga said.

Local leaders in Kilifi led by Kilifi Town Council chairperson Esther Kache and a nominated councillor Joseph, who had accompanied the minister, claimed the community had not been informed about the government project and blamed the area fisheries officers for the returned of the funds.

Wachira admitted before the minister that area heads of department had not been involving the community and the leaders concerning projects which the government intended to do in the area.

"Bwana minister I fully agree that our government officers from different departments in Kilifi have not been informing members of the public concerning government projects something which resulted to underdevelopment of the area," Wachira said.

Minister Kingi wondered why the area MP, Benedict Gunda and local leaders in the area had not been



Mr. Kingi, Fisheries Development minister

incorporated when the fish pond project was started in the area though the project was much concerned with the development of the constituency.

"It's a shock that my officers in the ministry of fisheries in bahari

never involved the area MP Gunda though the project was directly connected with the development of the constituencies which had benefited with economic stimulus programme," Kingi.

Magarini residents demand land for school

By BEKADZO TONDO

RESIDENTS of Majengo village in Fundisa location in Magarini want the government to allocate them land within the Magarini Settlement Scheme to build a Public Primary school.

The residents who want the Ministry of Lands to allocate them land, claim that their children had to walk for long distances before they can access the nearest school.

According to the chairman of Majengo Village Development Committee, Lennox Mangi, the residents say it is unfair for the portion of land to remain idle while they lack space to construct a school.

"We have conducted a search at the relevant lands offices and we have found that the portion of land measuring four acres has not been allocated to anybody and since we need a nearby, we have decided to request this land officially for the

community project" said Mangi.

A report done by the department of land adjudication and settlement in Malindi proved that the land had not been allocated to anybody.

However, the report which was sent to the director of land adjudication and settlement in Nairobi indicated that the land is being occupied by one squatter.

"Legal and ground status report on plot numbers 496/735 Shaurimoyo scheme, the plot has no

records of allocation and no title deed has been issued" said the report.

These findings were obtained after the director of land adjudication and settlement from Nairobi in a letter signed by P.K Mwangi who had directed the land adjudication officer in Malindi to visit the plot and give his report.

The residents are planning to put up both primary and secondary schools and a health centre to

serve them. Mangi said most pupils had been forced to remain at their homes due to lack of a nearby school.

He further said the area has registered an increased in population and thus requires essential services like that of schools and health facilities near them. "The population of people in our locality has risen and there are children who need to go to school but we do not have a school nearby," Mangi said.

Group lobbies MPs to pass crucial Aids Bill

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MEMBERS of Parliament have been urged to pass the Kenya National Aids Commission Bill 2012 in order to enable HIV and Aids patients to access better services.

Participants attending a three-day workshop at a Nyeri hotel petitioned the MPs to pass the Bill which provides for the creation of a powerful commission to streamline services targeting people living with Aids.

They said that the commission is to replace the National Aids Control Council which has been in existence since year 1999.

Nacc legal Officer Charles Kariuki said there is need to establish a National Aids Commission in the country in order to be like any other country in Africa.

"Nacc is restricted to undertaking certain responsibilities and has no powers and so there is need for the MPs to establish it," he added.

Kariuki also said that the Government should also gazette the HIV/Aids as a National disaster to ease bureaucracies in the Government thus making the work easier.

Central regional Monitoring and evaluation officer James Kiiru who was also present during the workshop lamented that HIV and Aids continues to be a major public health and socio-economic challenge adversely affecting all the sectors in the region.

He said approximately 1.2 million people are living with the virus as at the end of the year 2007 countrywide.

"Most women are infected with the virus (8.4 per cent) compared to men (5.4 per cent). Most couples are more affected. The epidemic has directly led to 1.2 million children being orphaned from HIV-related deaths," he added.

Kiiru said those mostly with virus are the heterosexual couples within a union/steady participants who are 44.1 per cent.



Parliament in session

State urged to compensate pyramid scheme victims

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Government has been called upon to factor in Ksh 15 billion in the annual budget to compensate millions of Kenyans who lost their money through pyramid schemes.

Speaking during the forum, Bishop, Erastus Njoroge of Four square church said four million Kenyans were conned in the pyramid scam and are languishing in abject poverty.

The call was made by various members of public attending this year's budget consultation forum conducted by five parliamentarians at the Nyeri Municipal town hall.

Among the MPs in attendance were Mathioya MP Clement Muchiri and Kieni MP Nemesis Warugongo among others.

"Majority of the affected families are unable to feed, clothe, or pay school fees for their children after they were swindled of their hard earned income about five years ago," said the Bishop.

The Bishop said the Government should set aside a compensation kitty in its budget in a bid to help victims recover their lost money.

Several public figures who spoke in turns during the forum, unanimously underscored various socio-economic ills that have befallen the multitude of pyramid victims.

They said some persons have committed suicide, others have divorced, or separated, while more others engaged into drugs trafficking activities following huge loss of their monies to cartels of the Pyramid scheme.

Some members of the public argued that there is no justification for the Government to put in place poverty eradication projects while they are unable to arrest those who orchestrated the scheme.

More women to join politics, says Kamar

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

Kenyan and African women have fought many battles in their pursuit for equality and respect in society. Theirs has been a rocky path filled with tearful tales of brutality, dehumanization and even death.

From the beaches of the Indian Ocean to the shores of Lake Victoria, women have risked their lives for the liberation of their gender.

From the legendary Mekatilile Wa Menza to the late Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai; from the elderly Phoebe Asiyo to the brave Martha Karua, Kenyan women have struggled to defeat negative cultural practices that dehumanize them.

As Kenyans prepare for the 2012 general elections, women must strategise to win more elective positions since the constitution has expanded their space for gaining power.

High Education Minister Prof. Margaret Kamar says women empowerment on electoral laws ahead of

general election 2012 remains critical.

Prof. Kamar says Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission, IEBC and other Constitutional stakeholders should intensify civic education on key laws to enable not only women but all Kenyans make informed choices in the next polls.

"Many Kenyans and especially women are not conversant with the new election and political party laws and this may hinder their effective participation in the coming polls", Kamar observes.

Banning politicians from fundraising, the election law, Prof. Kamar says it is timely and will increase chances for women participation.

"The election law is good for it stops some male politicians who often use their resources through fundraising to influence votes", Prof. Kamar reiterates.

Prof. Kamar says political fields are white and women should go for the all seats as enshrined in the constitution and not merely the one

third gender rule.

"Although they have fewer resources that could assemble effective political campaigns, women aspirants have started raising funds through alternatives despite fundraising ban on elective officers. Our main concerns and which may disadvantage most women is the widespread ignorance on the new laws," the legislator observes.

But despite the electoral laws ignorance, Moira Chepkok is bubbling with confidence as she strategizes to taste political waters for the first time during this year's election. The retired banker says she is ready to tackle the men and all the cultural obstacles on her path.

"Women should not tie themselves down to the one third women representation as stipulated in the Constitution. The political window is wide open. Women should know there are other seats available to compete for", says Chepkok.

She argues that experience in the

Rift Valley shows that women have what it takes to lead. The region leads in women representation in the current parliament.

Chepkok says that women can offer credible, accountable, transparent and integrity based leadership. "Women have in most cases remained good stewards of family resources in spite of the lesser role they play in African family set ups", she claims.

Chepkok is reluctant to disclose which seat she has set her eyes but says she is warming up for County seats when time comes.

Martha Ndogoto who is the program coordinator of the Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA) acknowledges the fact that resource disparities may hinder possible female candidates.

Ndogoto says her organization has been on women capacity building mission mainly on peace and political processes across the country.

She asserts that winning in the coming politics may not entirely de-

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

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

Reflections on my stay in South East Asia

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**JANE
MURUTU**

CONGRATULATIONS to all our Partner Civil Society Organizations in Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western regions for making this project achieve its objectives. The most recent activity within the project was the Divisional Community Leaders meetings that brought on board the Administration Police and Kenya Police officers. It must have been very interesting and stimulating to watch as these officers were put to task to explain what is perceived to be injustices meted to citizens. The officers had the onus to mingle with the members in public in a dialogue platform created by the EU-co-funded project.

At the end of the month of May a one day meeting was held in Kisumu with the expert pools, the coordinators and chairpersons of the CSO peace-networks to brainstorm on ways to have an effective and functional expert pools and how to improve the cooperation between the expert pools and the regional peace-networks even after the project team leaves the scene. There is always a fear that after the initial funding is finished, the target groups in the project will be left vulnerable to members of the local community that disapprove of the project's message or objective. On the contrary, this project has well established structures that are full of knowledge, expertise and a technical team that can steer peace-building into unimaginable heights. The bottom line is we need peaceful elections; we need communities to co-exist peacefully with rare incidences of violence.

I must admit that it feels great to be

back at home in Kenya. I missed "Ugali" for the entire three months in Thailand. During my stay at Chulalong K o r n University in Bangkok, I saw and

learned a lot that if I was to write it down I will need some months to narrate my experiences. The study took me to many places in and out of Bangkok and in April to Nepal's capital city, Kathmandu and further to Pokhara.

I would like to share some lessons that I have learnt, which I think will help many of us. In any conflict situation, the importance of proper analysis cannot be wished away. This involves a whole gamut exercise of identifying the problem, causes, conditions, and effects. Of equal value is the need to identify actors in the conflict in the perspective of whether they are leaders, the relationships between the different actors and agendas. It is also imperative to know from the initial stage what underlies the conflict. We have conflict entrepreneurs/merchants who benefit from conflicts and enjoy the medium of conflict. In as much as I don't dispute the fact that conflict is inherent in human nature and it is good except when it turns violent.

How then do civil society organizations then make initial contacts with the different actors in a conflict in building relationships, trust, creating networking /support group for peace? There is no

single formula to the methodology of approach; however the timing aspect is vital. The actors to a conflict must be ready to listen, learn and change in order to resolve the conflict. I will not go into pains of explaining the different methods that may be employed in resolving conflicts such as negotiation, mediation, appreciative inquiry and open space. Additionally use of songs, theatre, painting, narratives and humour are some of the new ways that some peace-builders are exploring for instance in Nepal in the process of peacebuilding.

Organizations should not be ignorant of projecting scenario analysis: worst case scenario, positive case scenario, in between (mid) case scenario. These analyses helps in guiding on what measures need to be put into the swing of operations to help check a violent conflict.

The role of media also referred to as "peace journalism" or conflict sensitive journalism can contribute tremendously to peaceful co-existence in communities. There is vast potential that media offers in allowing people to tell their own stories, in their own way. I am optimistic that we shall have CSOs in our Partnership for Peace who will come up with community /FM radio that broadcasts only peace and "demystify" the enemy. As such communities perceived as victims will be able to confront an array of traumatic events.

Contrary to the notion that women and girls are always on the receiving end during war, in Nepal they were also active professional fighters in the Maoist insurgency. They functioned as organizers, propagandists, cultural activists, logistics suppliers, nurses

for the wounded fighters and cadres, espionage workers, cover for the party cadres or combatants. They actually comprised 20 per cent of the Maoist combatants. During most wars, women are ubiquitous and highly visible; when wars are over and the war songs are sung, women disappear. Therefore women need to be involved in signing of peace agreements, at the negotiating tables and all other national processes.

In Nepal, schools have been declared as zones of peace. Teachers, parents and students work together to resolve conflicts. Some schools like Montessori schools and others have peace education incorporated in the curriculum. Nepal has also a Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction to their credit.

A final lesson not to be forgotten by anyone is the fact that the solution to a country's problems does not lie in the number of constitutions. For instance Thailand has to date had seventeen constitutions and it still grapples with grave issues of minorities in its southern region. Nepal has had seven so far. The antidote is to invest in people. Whatever the government, donor community or non-state actors do, my hope is that they will always do it for the common good of the people.

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

Gusii leaders call for end to cattle rustling

BY **BOB OMBATI**

GUSII National Elders Council (Etureti Yo'Mogusii) have condemned the increasing cases of cattle rustling along Borabu-Sotik district common border and called on the boarder communities to shun the vice for peaceful co-existence.

The council chairman, John

Abai, says the elders have launched massive peace campaigns along the border to educate members from both Gusii and Kalenjin communities on the importance of peace to enhance development.

Abai, flanked by Forum for Unity and Development of Omogusii (FORUDO) chairman, Dr Osoro Nyakweba, says peace stakeholders from both communities will be involved to end the boarder conflicts triggered by cattle rustling.

Cattle rustling, noted Abai created tension along the border and was a recipe for chaos and flare-ups witnessed during the 2007 post-election violence which, according to Justice Waki Commission's report left 1133 people dead, over 500,000 people internally displaced and properties worth billions of shillings destroyed.

The official told the press in Kisii town

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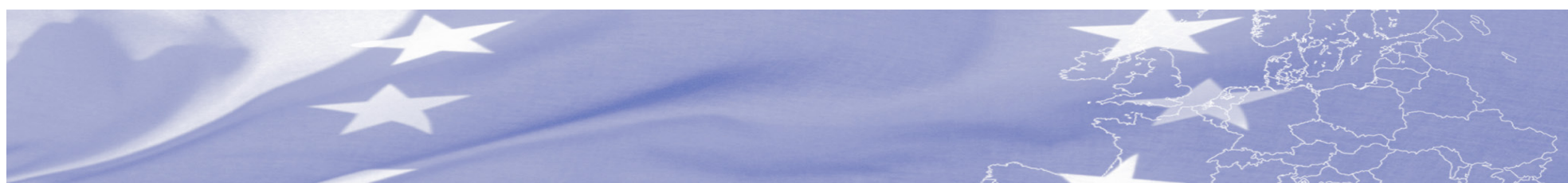
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Gusii leaders call for end to cattle rustling

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the two communities have co-existed peacefully for long and challenged provincial administrators and security officers to beef up security in the area, apprehend the rustlers and arraign them in court.

"This is a wrong signal, given the fact that the country is gearing up for the general election. We should team up to foster peace ahead of the exercise to enhance unity," said Abai.

Abai dismissed the notion harboured by some communities that cows belong to them and that they were simply taking away what rightly belongs to them, stressing that the belief was retrogressive, primitive and should be discarded.

Kenyans, noted Abai had a constitutional right to own property anywhere in the country and be protected, adding that cattle rustling should be treated as a criminal offense and not a cultural practice by some communities.

He said it was wrong and immoral for a person to think it is their right to steal cows from another community and term it illegal when the same vice targets their community, adding that elders from such communities should implore the youths to discard such practices.

The elders urged church leaders and provincial administrators along the common border to conduct joint church serv-



Peacebuilding meeting among the Gusii and Maasai communities.

ices and public meetings respectively to foster peace.

They urged members from each community to share security information and be willing to reveal the names of cattle

rustlers and help security agents to arrest them, alleging that some rustlers engaged in the vice and enjoyed protection from their communities.

The elders lauded the government

for paying Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Kisii and Nyamira counties Ksh. 50 million, saying the move would hasten healing and reconciliation among the communities.

Kibunjia advises teachers on national cohesion, integration

By TITUS MAERO

THE National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) chairman, Dr Mzalendo Kibunjia, has asked management of learning institutions to sensitise students on what the national cohesion and integration is all about.

Kibunjia said NCIC was keen to establish a society, whose values are harmonious and non-discriminatory for peaceful co-existence and integration of everyone.

He said sensitizing students on cohesion and integration will be a step towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination and encouraged institutions to embrace it.

Speaking in Kakamega, Kibunjia said while students are critical resource in steering transformative change in society, their continued exclusion from effective participation in all spheres of life pose a serious threat to stability.

He said lack of priority and implementation of policies and programmes that target school leavers inhibits constructive youth involvement in the developmental of the country.

Kibunjia said NCIC will engage stu-

dents and school leavers in a structured and co-ordinated way in order to maximise the use of the youth segments, which are often referred to as future leaders.

The commission was established after the 2008 post-election violence to facilitate and promote equal opportunity, good relations, harmony and peaceful co-existence between persons of different ethnic and racial communities.

He said the commission would strive to promote education and training programmes to create awareness and support advancement of peace and harmony among all age brackets in the community.

Kibunjia said engagement with stakeholders in the education sector will enable NCIC to reach out to youth as a vital counselling of the Kenyan society.

NCIC boss said the commission intends to undertake initiatives in partnership with the Ministry of Education. The idea is to sensitise the youth early while still in school to embrace nationhood, cohesion and integration within school curricula.

Kibunjia said schools have a long history of supporting diversity by providing an avenue for students to co-exist and to share different cultures and traditions.



Mr. Kibunjia, NCIC chairman.



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Well of peace unites two warring communities

By **LINK CORRESPONDENT**

It is aptly referred to as the Peace Well. Constructed at the height of ethnic conflict between members of the pastoralist community and farmers, the borehole has become a symbol of tranquility with the onetime sworn enemies continuing to coexist peacefully.

With most parts of the country experiencing unbridled violence occasioned by the disputed Presidential elections in 2007, Maai Mahiu enjoyed relative peace, perhaps with lesson learnt after more than 10 people were killed during the fight over resources in 2005.

The magnitude of the violence left several people maimed and others forced out of their homes before the situation was contained. The root cause of the problem was blamed on resources especially water.

With that, the leaders agreed to have two Wells constructed with a Non-Governmental Organization undertaking the initiative.

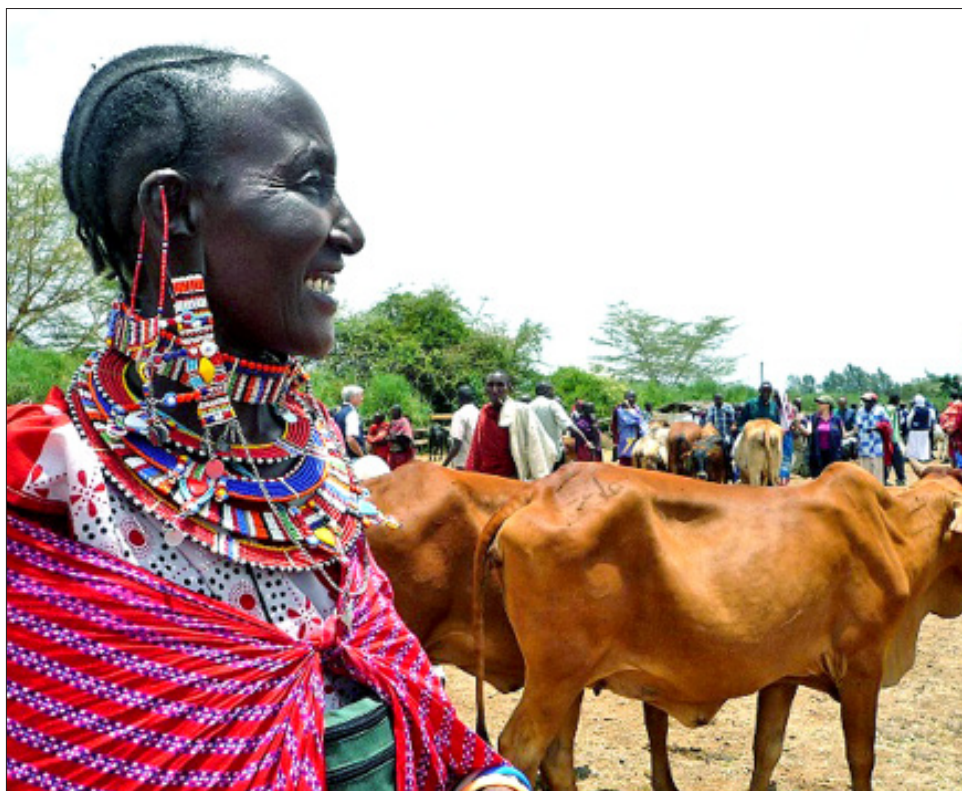
And to underscore the importance of the Well, it was commissioned by the head of state Mwai Kibaki as the local leaders sought to cool ethnic tension simmering at the time. Constructed inside a parcel of land belonging to Maai Mahiu Secondary School, the significance of the borehole continues to bear fruit with the School authorities eager to accentuate the gains of the Peace Well.

"We are actually using the Peace Well to promote harmony among students from different ethnic background," said the institution's Principal, Naftary Chege Mwangi.

Soon after reporting to the school, he realized deep rooted mistrust between the two communities and embarked on a mission to diffuse tension among the teenagers stemming from the fight that had rocked the area previously.

"With the area hosting the two communities it was prudent to work on the psychological aspect of the students and emphasize the importance of peaceful co-existence," recalls the seasoned teacher.

To attest to this, the school was dominated by students from the farming com-



The pastoral community in such of water for their herds. The borehole has become a symbol of tranquility.

munity, despite the huge potential exemplified by their counterparts from the pastoralist group with some of them scoring impressive grades at the primary level.

"The bright students from the Maasai community chose to enroll elsewhere fearing reprisal from their majority counterparts following the unfortunate ethnic warfare pitting them," added Mr Mwangi.

A visit to the school reveals unbreakable board between all the students studying at the institution, making it almost impossible to decipher where one hails from, an undertaking that gives Mr Mwangi a vote of confidence.

"Ethnic tensions are retrogressive in all avenues and hinders progress whether academically or development wise," argued the Principal.

The recent move to split the school into

a boy and girl's section, he added, would not erode the gains made in bringing the one time warring groups together. "The emblematic Peace Well is still within the compound," he said, amid laughter.

But the unnecessary tension that characterized the unhappy tenure has been swept under the carpet and the number of students especially from the Maasai community keeps swelling by the day.

"We are now reaping the gains of the Peace Well with the students embracing each other despite of their diverse ethnic background," enthused the head teacher.

The joint effort has borne fruits with the student's population standing at 800, making it one of the biggest secondary school within the Naivasha district. "We are headed in the right direction," said Mr Mwangi.

Together with the board Chairman,

Josephat Nyamu they have embarked on a campaign to bring the elder citizens into the reconciliation table as recently demonstrated by a fundraiser held at the institution.

The charitable performance brought together political leaders and respected Maasai Community leaders with members of the Kikuyu community also registering an impressive turnout.

And all the guests that included four civic leaders donated handsomely, with Ksh1.6 million raised. "It was a great boost towards achieving long lasting peace in the area," said the board chairman.

The leaders took the podium and implored the communities to co-exist peacefully for the sake of development activities in the sun baked area. And the message was loud and clear.

Coincidentally, the school was later to play host to students fleeing areas that had been affected by the post-election violence that rocked the country. With majority of the displaced people settling in Maai Mahiu area and its environs, it became a school of choice for the students.

And it increased challenges facing the school. "Majority of them could not pay fees and it was impossible to send them away," said Mr Nyamu.

However, the school is not taking the challenge lying down and the administrators have embarked on a mission to assist the needy lot by securing sponsorship for bright pupils.

"Majority of them was hit hard by the violence and raising money to pay fees is quite a tall order for their parents and guardian. Nevertheless, we are going out of our way to help them out of their predicament," added Nyamu.

Given the significance of the Peace Well and the efforts put in place by teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, it might as well become a model institution for those seeking long lasting peace in institutions of learning.

The hearty exchange was a clear testimony that the communities are ready to bury the hatchet and forge a united front for the sake of posterity.

CSOs oppose return of Kiplagat to TJRC

By **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

CIVIL Society Organisations (CSOs) have strongly opposed the reinstatement of Bethwel Kiplagat as the chairperson of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC).

His return is being viewed as a government's plot to divert people's focus from the commission in order to manipulate the issues raised during the

commission's public hearings across the country.

Taiga Wanyanja, the co-ordinator of Torture Survivors Organisation, is categorical that the government was right behind Kiplagat's return to the TJRC for ulterior motive.

Wanyanja expressed fears that Kenyans may not trust the report TJRC may come up with, with Kiplagat at helm of the commission. "It will be very difficult for Kenyans and the

world at large to trust TJRC given that the chair was adversely mentioned in some of the issues that are under probe by the commission" he says.

He says that history will judge the coalition government harshly if Kiplagat will be allowed to jeopardize the commission's report that has cost Kenyan taxpayers millions of shillings.

The government, Wanyanja adds, should come out openly and tells Kenyans why it sees Kiplagat as the most

suitable person to chair TJRC contrary to public perception.

TJRC was established by an act of Parliament to lead the inquiry into gross human rights violations and other historical injustices in Kenya between December 12, 1963 and February 28, 2008.

The commission is part of the accountability component of agenda four (4) of the National Accord signed in 2008.



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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

IEBC puts political parties on notice

By **BOB OMBATI**

POLITICAL parties that used unconventional means to recruit members in a rush to comply with the Political Parties Act, now risk deregistration.

Dr Collins Odote, who is an official with the Registrar of Political Parties (RPP) and National Democratic Institute (NDI), says that candidates in the affected parties will also be disqualified from participating in the forthcoming and subsequent elections.

The official, who spoke at Gusii county council during a workshop to sensitize leaders on the Political Parties Act, said the Registrar of political parties will soon publish the list of registered members for various parties for verification.

He told members of the public who had been registered by more than one political party to lodge an official complaint with the Registrar of Political Parties to leave room for disciplinary action. "Stern action will be taken against the parties who gave phony lists. Individual who are registered twice and fail to report are equally culpable," said Odote, adding that it is illegal for a person to belong to more than one political party.

Odote observed the names of people registered by more than one political party will be removed from the register and they will be required to apply afresh to be members of their party of choice.

Aspirants for various political seats, said Odote, will be required to meet the education requirements outlined in the constitution besides meeting the high threshold of ethical standards.

He rejected proposals by councillors that education should not be used to block individuals willing to contest for respective positions in the political scene.



Members of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) with former Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo (centre).

Odote said the law cannot be circumvented to fit the whims of some leaders, saying the current political dispensation required qualified and competent leaders who will help spearhead development at counties and National Assembly for the benefit of the public.

The government, noted Odote, would only consider academic certificates obtained from recognized institutions locally and globally, adding that those who will present certificates from unrecognized learning in-

stitutions will be barred from contesting for elective and appointive seats.

"The documents should be recognized and certified by relevant examining bodies. The bodies will also be required to confirm their authenticity," said Odote.

The official, who led a team from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and RPP noted that the Commission will conduct massive voter education ahead of the next election to ensure that over 70 percent of Kenyans take part in the

exercise.

He said the Commission was partnering with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in conducting civic education at the grassroots to sensitize the electorate on the constitution and their role in democratic process and governance.

Odote cautioned aspirants gunning for various seats against bribing voters and taking part in fund-raising as it is now an offense that may see them disqualified from contesting for any elective or appointive post.

Monitor activities of Saboot laibons for sake of peace

By **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

SABOOT cultural prophets (Laibons) are now being accused of causing tension in Kopsiro division in Mt. Elgon District of Bungoma County ahead of the next general elections.

Some of the laibons are allegedly peddling false prophecies that are likely to spark off tension and war like activities in the region.

In the past, the laibons were believed to be the eyes of the community in predicting the future and giving appropriate direction.

Whatever the laibons predicted in the past came to be and they were as a result taken seriously by the community.

However, most of the laibons have diverted their original focus and are now engaged in activities that benefit them individually at the expense of the entire community.

Mr. Geoffrey Ndiwa, a resident of Kopsiro division claims that one of the laibons is currently misleading the community systematically through false prophecies for selfish interests.

Ndiwa alleges that the laibon is telling area residents that there is going to be a re-survey of land in phase 1 and phase 2 of the Chepyuk settlement scheme and that two government officers will be killed in the process.

He alleges further that the laibon predicts that this will mark the beginning of a long chaotic period between the government and the clan that will be tied to the

killing of the government officers.

Ndiwa adds that the laibon is now asking the community to move and occupy land around the forest saying that only those near the forest will survive.

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Knut petitions IEBC to change election date

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) has called on the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to consider changing the elections date to December saying that the education calendar will be disrupted if elections are held in March.

KNUT national chairman Wilson Sossion called for peaceful elections and campaigns noting that children bear the brunt of violence as witnessed in the bungled 2007/8 general elections.

He spoke at Kiandangae village during the burial ceremony of Ainsworth Murimi Gichira, the son of Mr Harrison Gichira, KNUT Executive Secretary, Kirinyaga branch who died through a road accident.

Addressing the mourners at the ceremony, Sossion said that teachers are engaged as elections officials while most schools serve as polling stations and therefore learning will be interfered with.

He cautioned that in case of a run off learning will be interfered with even more stating that teachers will accept nothing later than a December elections.

Sossion took the occasion to put the government on notice for a nationwide teachers strike if money to employ ECD teachers and pay teachers allowances in full is not incorporated in this year's national budget.

In a thinly veiled reference to Finance Minister Njeru Githae, who is also the area MP, the KNUT chairman told the residents of Kirinyaga County to shun leaders who are insensitive to the plight of teachers as they have no regard for the future of the country's

children.

Sossion further faulted a task force report on employment of teachers saying that the country needs to employ 80,000 teachers and not 10,000 as reflected in the report. "The task-force did a shoddy job," Sossion said.

The KNUT chairman said scrapping the 8-4-4 system was not a wise move adding that the current system needs to be strengthened since it has served the country well in the past years.

He wondered where more than Ksh320 billion needed to implement

the new system will come from saying that the government should use half of the amount to employ more teachers and build modern structures in school to improve the quality of education.

Sossion called on the government to pay school heads, their deputies and heads of departments responsibility allowances to motivate them adding that this will turn around the performance in learning institutions and better the lives of Kenyans. "This will make school leadership competitive and motivate students to work hard to be like their teachers instead of compel-

ling them to sign performance contracts," said Sossion.

Sossion added that teaching is a calling and should not be compared with construction of roads where we give construction workers time-lines saying that teachers need time and peace of mind to perform.

He further took the occasion to condemn the rising cases of road accidents along the Thika super highway calling on the government to come up with road safety rules to save our children and other Kenyans from untimely deaths caused on the roads.



KNUT chairman Wilson Sossion addressing the mourners at Kiandangae village in Kirinyaga County recently.

More women to join politics, says Kamar

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pend on the resource power but sound policies and networking with like-minded groups.

"Our partnership with women is not about funding but imparting leadership, lobbying, and advocacy skills," she reiterates. She however says COPA can provide linkages with prospective funding organizations to enable women battle out with well resourced male politicians.

And while Chepkok bemoans the fact that women are reluctant to support one another, COPA's program coordinator encourages women who are unwilling to venture into politics to champion for female candidacy.

However, Chepkok is not the only woman steaming with political ambition. Lillian Kiptoo, 43 is an old hand in politics and says empowering women on life skills remain her passion.

When not in politics Mrs. Kiptoo will be busy traversing villages talking to her fellow women on matters of new farming technologies, use of natural energy in home cooking and sowing the seed into their minds on how to challenge stereotype minds.

The mother of six and district coordinator, women Bunge (grass root women parliament) says education for all will top her agenda if elected. "Educated society is an equally empowered community; socially and economically," she adds.

Despite her low education background, she has struggled through thin and thick to see her three children in University.

Vying for women representative in Elgeyo-Marakwet County, Kiptoo observes this year's political game plan may not rely much on one's experience and finances: "The country is in deficit of visionary leaders. I am ready to provide my rich menu of leadership", she asserts.

Coming from humble background Kiptoo, a form two dropout says her political strategy is simple. She is a well known village girl who has worked tirelessly with various civil societies in the area and has the blessings right from the church leaders to community elders not to mention her fellow women. "My support will come from friends whom I have established as I go about my daily duties mobilizing grass root women to discussing issues affecting us and our families", she adds.

However, her biggest hurdle remains defeating male chauvinism: "Our community is still caught up in the retrogressive culture that thinks a woman is a child and not fit for instruments of power," she bemoans.

And although this will be her second attempt into politics, she is oblivious of the difficulties women candidates are likely to face.

Mrs. Kiptoo, women Chairlady, Kenya National Federation of Agriculture Production, KENFAP says all women should stand up and be numbered in this year's election in spite of the barriers.

"In 2007 general election I came second in a nine-man civic leadership contest. Today women in my backyard are a disappointed lot by the incumbent leadership. They long for



Prof. Kamar

meaningful change the new constitution has promised to us all and it's only through a woman – obviously seen, felt and tasted the deadly struggles that come with destitution", she asserts.

She adds that although finances may also come in handy to derail her political dream, her efforts through USAID sponsored projects – women and youths economic empowerment through implementing agent – Mercy Corps; election laws awareness is still wanting and may not only ruin her chances but also for other women seeking elective posts and eligible voters countrywide. Nancy Koech, a program coordinator with Mercy Corp argues that despite the levelled political play field, cultural issues continue to undermine the women resolve to exercise their democratic right.

"Social dynamics and community systems have given more say to men than women", she explains adding that most women fear participating in

politics due to intimidation and insecurity that characterize campaigning periods. Nevertheless, Koech postulates that women need to build their financial base and expand their grassroots and national networks.

She says Mercy Corps has been building women capacity through grass root 'women/youth Bunges'. The initiative sponsored by USAID is aimed at engaging and empowering women and youths economically – freeing them from social upheaval.

Engaging youths who form the large percentage in society Ms Koech says would reduce poverty and idleness hence snatching them away from hell-bent-politicians, accused of using them for political expediency in the past.

Former assistant minister for health Dr. Enoch Kibunguchy says that men should create an environment conducive for women to thrive in politics: "Our women are showing us that they are able. The focus of what one has below the belt as opposed to above the neck is destroying our society" Dr. Kibunguchy observes adding that violence must be tamed to enable women actively participate in politics. The Catholic Bishop of Eldoret Diocese Cornelius Korir, says that peace is critical to enable all Kenyans participate in politics.

While the church continues to monitor political parties, engaging political leaders that have been labelled with tags of violence instigation, he feels the much anticipated ICC process should be fair in its impending rulings to help peace, healing and reconciliation efforts in the country.

Doubts emerge over the future of Busia Town

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

BUSIA town, which is supposed to be the gateway to Kenya from other East African community countries, is situated in a freehold land making it difficult for experts to plan for it.

This emerged during a stakeholders' workshop recently in which experts painted a gloomy picture of the town which they described as a massive slum with haphazardly put structures.

According to one of the experts, Dr. Gephus Opata of Siaga and Associates consultants firm, Busia can aptly be described as a slum despite its fame and upcoming towering buildings. Dr Opata is part of a team of about eight experts tasked with the job of bringing sanity into Busia which for a long time has had to do without basic infrastructure and other social amenities because of poor planning.

He said during the workshop that every town in the country is supposed to have an approved plan. "Every municipality is supposed to have an approved plan and it is the initiative of the ministry of local government to plan the towns," he added. The project which was initiated in mid-last year is expected to be complete by August this year.

The new plan is supposed to be forwarded to the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Lands and later gazetted as a legal document," said the director who is also a don at Moi University. The team which has been assigned to carry out feasibility studies in the town, will submit their recommendation to the local authorities ministry for approval.

If approved, the experts warned that land owners in the town would be forced to surrender their parcels of land in order to pave way for adequate planning of the town to acceptable standards.

Currently the town lacks amenities such as playing grounds and other recreational facilities because most of the land is privately owned and thus the municipality does not have space to put up the structures.

Because of this problem, it is instructive to note that some individuals residing within the town have even resorted to burying their dead relatives within their compounds in the town although this is prohibited by the laws governing urban settlements. Attesting to this, Busia mayor Imelda Obwana noted that her town planning department has been crippled and lacks the capacity to carry out basic planning because virtually all the town is situated on freehold land.

Said the mayor, "this is why we are appealing to the town residents to heed and cooperate with whatever recommendations the experts are going to come up with to pave way for a better place which is well planned for everybody. The team has been collecting data and has shared it with the residents. Some of the challenges that continue to inhibit expansion plans include the absence of public and community land to create room for expansion.

"Busia could be the headquarters of Busia County and there is need to create a parking lot especially for the trailers since most of them are packed by the roadside, and in case of fire, the nearest fire engine is in Tororo. This is a disaster and needs to be dealt with," Opata lamented.

By BOB OMBATI

ABOUT 5000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Nyamira and Kisii counties have been paid slightly over Ksh. 50 million, ending five years of agony and long wait after the 2007 post-election violence.

The IDPs received their compensation in a function held at Gusii stadium and presided over by Special Programmes Minister, Esther Murugi who was accompanied by Gusii leaders and provincial administrators.

Gusii Members of Parliament who included Prof. Sam Ongeru (Nyaribari Masaba), Chris Obure (Bobasi), Simon Ogari, (Bomachoge), Wilfred Ombui (North Mugirango Borabu), Walter Nyambati (Kitutu Masaba) and nominated MP George Nyamweya apologized for the delay.

Prof Ongeru and Obure noted that Kisii people had suffered during the violence triggered by the disputed presidential poll results, stressing that they lost properties while others lost their loved ones.

The ministers said some of the victims who were uprooted from their homes in various parts of the country have been forced to rely on their friends and relatives while those who had no land ventured into menial work to eke out a living.

Each IDP received Ksh. 10,000 but those who lost their relatives or became incapacitated during the violence will receive additional funding.

Murugi said that a list of those who suffered most had been compiled and will be aided since they had special needs.

The Special Programmes Minister noted that the government was committed to compensating all the victims before the next General Elections and urged Kenyans to vote for leaders who will unite the country, foster peace and develop-

Nyamira, Kisii IDPs finally compensated



IDPs in a camp demanding for compensation. They were finally compensated. Photo/File

ment.

She blamed the 2007 violence on bad politics and advised Kenyans to shun leaders who divide them along ethnic lines.

Her remarks came as Gusii National Elders council voiced their concern over the delay in paying the victims.

Led by John Abai, the elders

said the government should buy land and resettle the IDPs, adding that some were still traumatized and wanted to be resettled elsewhere to forget the ugly scenes they witnessed in 2007.

"We have widows and widowers who saw their loved ones killed in broad daylight. They should be fully supported to cope with life," said Abai.

The official faulted Gusii leaders for taking too long to address the plight of the IDPS from the area, alleging that some leaders were now pushing for the compensation to gain political mileage.

He said IDPS in other areas had been settled and delays in compensating those affected in Gusii region were politically motivated.

The IDPs who talked to The Link said they had suffered and accused the MPs of ignoring their plight for long despite numerous pleas to them.

Eastern Nyanza Regional commissioner, Lydia Muriuki warned the victims to be wary of marauding con-men who were demanding Ksh. 1000 'processing fee' and urged them to report them to any nearest police station for arrest and prosecution.

State in efforts to improve cooperatives

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE Government has rolled out programmes aimed at improving management of cooperative societies.

Ms Nancy Waiguru, the Central Deputy Provincial Cooperative Officer, said the Ministry has rolled out a credit management programme that targets management committees in the cooperatives in order to control resources and minimize expenses that had accumulated the debt portfolio.

She said credit advanced by Saccos and cooperative societies has greatly contributed towards development countrywide.

Speaking in Murang'a during Murata Sacco general meeting, she said the credit management programme is aimed at ensuring members get high returns without depending on the government.

She said the Government waived Ksh1.2 billion in efforts to revive coffee sector in Murang'a County. "The credit management programme is geared towards the management of resources as the government does not have more funds to waive the debts," Waiguru said.

During the meeting Sacco's chairman Hiram Mwaniki said the team was working towards receiving an off-shore loan amounting to Ksh1.5 billion. "The financiers are coming next week to finalise the details before releasing funding that is scheduled to benefit members with cheap credit," Mwaniki said.

Mwaniki said the Sacco has since received waiver amounting to Ksh476 million with over Ksh500 million waiting to be released from treasury. "The waiver has assisted the Sacco to improve its services with more than Ksh634 million being granted as loans to coffee farmers," the chairman said.

Saccos tipped on dispute resolutions

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

CO-OPERATIVE societies have been urged to limit court cases and instead seek other ways of resolving disputes.

The Provincial Co-operative Officer (PCO) Western, Nathan Mukhweso has said the judicial process of settling disputes was expensive and time-consuming.

Speaking at Bungoma County Hall recently during Bungoma Teachers Sacco Annual General Meeting (AGM), Mukhweso said the society had so many cases pending in courts.

Mukhweso challenged the Sacco management under the chairmanship of Gabriel Wasike to ensure that court cases are reduced to manageable levels. This, he said would be in the interest of the society members adding that amicable ways of resolving disputes should be embraced in order to save members' money.

He pointed out that besides court cases taking long to be fully heard and determined, they also eat into members' dividends in terms of exorbitant legal fees.

"The amount used in litigation could be declared as dividends to the society members," the PCO observed.

Mukhweso lauded Bungoma Teachers Sacco saying it was one of the best managed co-operative societies in the region. The PCO, however, challenged the society management to invest in the hotel industry in order to improve the Sacco's capital base.

"With the devolved county governments in the offing you should now capitalize on lack of adequate social amenities in Bungoma County by investing in five star hotels," he said.

The PCO's remarks on litigation come at the time when Bungoma Teachers Sacco is embroiled in so many cases thus, both criminal and civil. Currently there are four (4) Sacco criminal cases pending hearing and termination in a Bungoma lower law court.

There are also two civil cases pending hearing and termination in the lower court. Sixteen (16) civil cases are in the high court and two (2) civil appeals pending hearing and termination.

Victoria Water board scales-up services

By TITUS MAERO

LAKE Victoria North Water Service Board (LVWSB), Chief Executive Officer, Eng Diru Magomere, has said the board has scaled-up efforts to ensure greater expansion of services in line with its mandate and the country's Vision 2030.

He said the recent completion and commissioning of the Nzoia cluster phase II water programme, which covered the larger Kakamega, is slated to benefit over 300,000 people who had no regular access to water and sanitation services.

"Prior to Nzoia cluster phase II programme, the board had just completed the phase I of the same programme, which targeted improvement and rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities in Kakamega County," he said.

He said both Nzoia cluster I and II programmes were funded by the government through the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and Germany Government Co-operation, under the long term water and sanitation services at a cost of Kshs 2.3 billion and Kshs 3.2

billion respectively.

He said the Nzoia cluster I and II water and sanitation programmes have directly benefited over 500,000 water consumers.

Under the Nzoia cluster, the board expanded the sewerage and sanitation components among them the sewer pond and construction of 2.7 Kilometre sewer lines.

Diru said in Nzoia cluster phase II, the existing dilapidated sewerage system was rehabilitated and expanded to cover new developing areas. He said this included Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) and the adjoining areas within Kakamega town including town centre.

He said in Amalemba and Maraba estates, the sewer lines and sewerage treatment works were not designed to handle waste water disposal demand for Kakamega town by the year 2025.

Diru said the projects also incorporated expansion of sewer lines and plot connections to increase access to the sewerage service in Kakamega town, which is the Headquarters of Kakamega County, which is the sec-

ond largest County after Nairobi County.

The CEO said the board in partnership with Water Services Trust Fund (WSTF) and GTZ has launched a new technology in ecological sanitation (ECOSAN) known as Urine Diversion Dehydration System (UDDS).

He said UDDS has been recognised as an option for pit latrines because it can be implemented in areas with minimal space for construction of pit latrines, rocky surface, high water table, water logged and flood prone areas.

"It is a waterless, dehydration/evaporation system that provides a safe, non-polluting and cost effective solution to the world wide sanitation problem," he said saying it offers a standard.

Some Kakamega professionals who spoke said the water and sanitation venture was in line with the country's vision 2030, which is a national long term development blue print that aims to create a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment.

Persons with disabilities launch website

By HENRY OWINO

THE Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK) and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWDs) have officially launched the Kenya Disability Website Portal, ([www.http://kenyadisability.or.ke](http://kenyadisability.or.ke)) which enables persons with disabilities to access web services with minimal strain.

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) are now able to access and view web-based content much more easily thanks to the launch of a website tailored for them. This seems to be a new revolution for PWDs to access, query and communicate to other people from all walks of life in the world.

The launch was held on the first day of a two-day workshop on e-accessibility for PWDs at a hotel in Nairobi where over 300 participants attended. According to Census report conducted in 2009, it is estimated that 3.46 per cent of Kenya's population have some form of disabilities majority of who do not have access to information technologies.

Francis Wangusi, the acting Director General of CCK, explained that the website is a means to provide and enhance information access, create awareness about disability as a human right issue for persons with disabilities, as well as keep them information available services for their needs. Wangusi added that the website will also let PWDs know of available job opportunities, have an event calendar and a resource centre.

"As the sector regulator, the Commission will continue supporting mechanisms that ensure persons with disabilities are able to benefit from the opportunities provided by ICT" acting CCK director-general Francis Wangusi said. Wangusi promised: "The commission will ensure all citizens can access communication services irrespective of social status. The world is becoming more and more ICT-centred and person with disabilities are keeping up with the change."

For instance; Kenyatta University in Nairobi introduced computers for people who are blind several years ago, which can be fitted with applications that read out loud to help the person know the contents of a web page.

In his speech, Dr James Nyikal, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Special Development urged web professionals to consider the needs of persons with disabilities when developing web pages. He noted the progress that CCK has made in addressing the access barriers for the special community.

"The portal has taken into account the different forms of disability and it is with this mind-set that it has been creat-

ed. It should also consider bold captioning of television programmes and more so to news bulletins for partial blind groups" Dr. Nyikal suggested.

Dr. Nyikal emphasized the aim is to ensure that people with low vision, blind, hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities among others access various information technology (IT) related services with lots of ease as one of the Constitution requirements.

The Constitution (Article 7 (3) (b)) provides that: The State shall ...promote the development and use of ...other communication formats and technologies to persons with disabilities.

Article 21 (3) in the Bill of Rights directs that all State organs and public officers have the duty to address the needs of vulnerable groups within society, including ...persons with disabilities....

Article 27 (4) on equality and freedom from discrimination provides that: The State shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground, including ...disability.

Article 54 (1) states that: A person with any disability is entitled; (c) to reasonable access to all places, public transport and information; (d) to use Sign language, Braille or other appropriate means of communication; and (e) to access materials and devices to overcome constraints arising from the

person's disability.

Article 260 defines disability as any person with physical, sensory, mental, psychological or other impairment, condition or illness that has, or is perceived by significant sectors of the community to have, a substantial or long term effect on an individual's ability to carry out ordinary day-to-day activities

According to Phoebe Nyagudi, the chairperson of National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWDs), today African Union specialized agency for disability prevention and research in the continent-the East African region office is serving in 12 countries. These include Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Comoros, Somalia Seychelles and Eritrea.

Nyagudi clarified the office provides a unified approach to issues of disabilities in all aspects such as the exchange of information organizing for products in the field of rehabilitation, disability prevention and the analysis of the National Policies and laws for Persons with Disabilities.

Nyagudi stated the PWDs Act of 2003 was enacted in December, 2003 and came into effect on 16th June, 2004. She said the Act outlines some of the requirements for PWDs in Communication services and CCK has moved

a step ahead in facilitate. "Kenya was the 27th country to ratify the convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on the 19th May, 2008," Nyagudi recalled.

She said the constitution provides a firm foundation for policy and legislation on disability which is in accordance with the universal standards for the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights and freedom for Persons with Disabilities.

The Act established the National Council for Persons with Disabilities which is a State Corporation (Public body) responsible for disability issues. The Act similarly established the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities which was operationalised in November, 2009.

The Government appoints the Board of Trustees to the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities and funds it to channel out financial support to individuals and institutions serving Persons with Disabilities. In addition, the Government has mainstreamed issues of disability in National Development; in 2008 it introduced disability mainstreaming indicator for the Public Sector performance contracting guidelines.

There are also regulations that provide for the Persons with Disabilities

"access compliance" for all buildings in the next five years and for all public vehicles with effect from January 2010 some of which are just paper work. There is the Children's Act no.8 of 2001 and the Employment Act of 2007 both of which outlaw discrimination against persons with Disabilities.

The National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities has received 7.9m USD in the current financial year up from 2.7m USD during the 2009/2010 financial year.

Nyagudi pointed out that the National Development Fund is charged with the responsibility of registering Persons with Disabilities, organizations and institutions and mainstreaming of disability in all private and public sectors of the government.

The National Policy on Persons with Disabilities of 2006 also looks at the economic empowerment of PWDs by provision of grants.

Infrastructure improvement and the programme on special protection were piloted in 33 districts and targeted the elderly persons, including those with disabilities. In addition, the Government has specifically inaugurated a programme for Cash Transfer to Persons with Severe Disabilities in all constituencies irrespective of age.

"One of the oldest Trust Funds in Kenya established in 1981, the National Fund for the Disabled of Kenya, whose patron is the president, currently receives 0.8m USD annually from the Government to enhance provision of appliances, equipment, economic empowerment and institutional infrastructure for PWDs," Nyagudi outlined.

There is however need for social protection provision of legal advice and services to persons with disabilities e.g. where they are discriminated or their rights violated.

Public awareness raising on causes of disability, legislation and treaties and accounting for all resources received. Voluntary, Testing and Counselling service providers should also be trained to be sensitive to PWDs.

There are 14 National Rehabilitation Centres established throughout the country to provide training to PWDs in vocational skills.

There is need for a coordination mechanism for the implementation of the policies and legislation. This will help in the institutionalization and the mainstreaming of disability concerns.

The three arms of Government should all be involved in the mainstreaming of PWDs. The emphasis has been on the legislature and executive, but the judiciary has been left out. The courts are inaccessible and the judicial officers are not trained on disability matters and laws.



Harun Hassan (left) of NNCD and Richard Bukachi Okola of HCF happy about the launch of the website services for them. Photo/Henry Owino

By BOB OMBATI

GUSII Mwalimu savings and credit co-operative (Sacco) registered remarkable growth with the profit margin rising from Ksh. 449 million in 2010 to Ksh. 500 million last year.

The Sacco's Chief Executive Officer, Charles Omwansa says the Sacco disbursed a total of Ksh. 2.8 billion loans in 2011 up from Ksh. 2.4 billion loaned to members in 2010 while the members deposits rose from Ksh. 2.3 billion in 2010 to Ksh. 2.5 last year, which represented a 9.8 percent growth.

The official attributed the growth to confidence in the Sacco which has opened new branches in Rongo and Transmara districts to boost its capital base. Omwansa, who was flanked by the society's chairman, David Nyang'au noted the Sacco's assets increased from Ksh. 3.2 billion in 2010 to Ksh. 3.9 billion last year.

He noted that the Sacco had computerized its operations and interlinked all its branches to ease operations. The

Gusii Sacco returns massive profits

official said that the Sacco has paid out Ksh. 291 million to members in dividends up from Ksh. 290 million in 2010 at the rate of 11.5 percent. "This performance reflects the confidence our shareholders have in the Sacco and the extent in which they patronize it," he stated, adding that the Sacco has over 17000 members.

Omwansa urged employers to remit their employees deductions on time to help the Sacco pay and process loans as delays hurt the members. He said the society had complied with the Sacco Societies Regulatory Authority (SASRA) requirements and had adopted best business practices and financial discipline to boost its profits, capital and dividends to members. The officer said plans are underway for the Sacco to start offering micro-finance credits to small scale business people to boost their businesses and alleviate poverty.

Meanwhile Wakenya Pamoja Sacco Chief Executive Officer, Gideon Oyuma says plans are at an advanced stage to transform the Sacco's Micro-finance Department into Deposit Taking Micro-finance (DTM) institution to meet the growing demand for banking services.

Oyuma says the Sacco will own 51 percent of the total shares in the company; local investors have been allocated 10 percent while Sacco staff has been assigned 4 percent adding that the rest will be set aside for external investors.

Speaking to The Link in his office, Oyuma disclosed the Sacco will invest Ksh 300 million from its micro-finance department while external investors will inject more capital into the venture.

Oyuma said Participatory Micro-finance Group for Africa (PAMIGA), a France-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) had agreed to support the Sacco to forge ahead with the

plan. He said the Sacco was currently awaiting approval from the Central Bank of Kenya, before they can roll out the project which will cost Ksh. 20 million.

"The Sacco will operate independently with its staff and board. Shareholders in DTM will be represented by directors who are to cater for their interests. The bank will open branches in other areas to cope with the increasing demand for banking services," he said. He said a consultant was working on plans to computerise Sacco's operations to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the CBK before the bank becomes operational.

The officers assured Sacco members that they will be shareholders in the DTM since the Society was a major shareholder, emphasizing that they will access cheap credit facilities to boost their incomes and businesses to reduce

poverty and improve their living standards. He noted that records will be updated in liaison with the shareholders who will also be required to endorse the initiative during a Special General Meeting (SGM) to be held before the end of the year.

The Sacco boss asked Kenyans in the diaspora to buy shares to help boost the bank's capital, saying it was the right channel to plough funds from the diaspora and invest them locally to create employment and improve the livelihoods of thousands of unemployed youths. He said the commissioning of the bank would help tap the over Ksh. 8 billion to be funnelled to the Gusii region for social, economic, educational, cultural and infrastructural development under the devolved system of government.

According to the Commission on Revenue Allocation, Kisii County will get Ksh. 5 billion while Nyamira will pocket Ksh. 3 billion based on population and levels of poverty.

KNCHR wants sensual rights of minorities protected

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) wants the government to decriminalize sex activities and sex work.

The Commission also wants healthcare providers to acknowledge the rights of sexual minorities as vulnerable groups and put in place programmes that respond to their unique sexual and reproductive health needs and challenges.

In their report dubbed "Realising sexual and reproductive health rights in Kenya" KNCHR underscores the need to sensitize communities on tolerance and acceptance of sexual minorities in society.

According to the report, sexual minorities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, and sex workers, suffer numerous human rights violations on account of their sexual orientation, gender identity or because of doing sex work.

"These include discrimination and stigma, exclusion from decision making processes, limited access to or unaffordable sexual and reproductive health services, violence and harassment, lack of proper knowledge on how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections and HIV, besides lack of recognition by the society," reads the report in part.

According to the report, transgender persons have been unable to access gender reassignment therapy owing to the unavailability of such services in Kenya coupled



KNCHR in a workshop. They want the government to decriminalize sex activities.

Photo/Malachi Motano

with discrimination and stigma.

A former Commissioner with the KNCHR, Hassan Omar says the report seeks to decriminalize adult same-sex sexual acts as opposed to promoting the same. "A gay person or sex worker should not for example be denied attention in hospital because of their sexuality or work since they, too, are protected by the provisions of Article 27 (4) of the Constitution. This provision uses a non-exclusive approach to outlaw discrimination"

Analysts say unless reproductive health rights for all groups are protected, the country may not be able to reduce maternal mortality by 75 per cent during by 2015, in

line with the Millennium Development Goals.

The Kenya Medical Association in partnership with other organizations such as the Kenya Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (KOGS) have been in the forefront advocating for laws and regulations that protect women's lives and health.

Unsafe abortion is a major public health crisis in Kenya, accounting for 35 per cent of Kenya's maternal deaths.

About 2,600 women die annually in Kenya from complications arising from unsafe abortion. Approximately 21,000 women are admitted each year to Kenya's public hospitals for treatment of

complications from incomplete and unsafe abortion, spontaneous or induced. More than 40% of those women "fall into the categories of probable or likely induced abortion."

These high rates of morbidity and mortality from unsafe abortion have been blamed on previous restrictive abortion law and rights violations and abuses that stemmed from the criminalization of abortion. The devastating impact of the law on women's lives and health is also the consequence

of rights violations experienced by Kenyan women that lead to unwanted pregnancies.

According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, "nearly 20 percent of births in Kenya are unwanted and an additional 25 percent are mistimed." High rates of sexual violence, limited access to family planning services and information, poverty, and discrimination against pregnant adolescents in Kenyan schools are key factors leading to unwanted and unplanned pregnancies and, consequently, unsafe abortion in Kenya.

These provisions together with others not specifically cited are progressive and seek to expand the enjoyment of reproductive health rights for all Kenyans without discrimination. Focus must now shift to the implementation of the new law without which they remain mere paper rights.

The report was guided by Article 43 of the Constitution, which provides every person with the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

It is thus important to establish a legal and policy framework governing the implementation of sexual and reproductive health rights in Kenya and assess the extent to which state and non-state actors are complying with their obligations relating to sexual and reproductive health rights in Kenya.

Nyeri youth to benefit from Swiss aid

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

OVER 2,000 students in youth polytechnics within Central Rift will benefit from a Ksh70 million project aimed at promoting vocational skills among the youth.

The project which involves five Youth Polytechnics will help the youth become self-reliant and responsible members of the community.

The project dubbed Vijana Na Ujuzi (Youth with Skills) will empower youths who are unable to pursue formal education and careers and make them employable and productive. The project, funded by Co-operaid Switzerland through a local organization- Help Mission Development Services (HMDS).

HMDS Executive Director, Ms Josephine Sindavi reiterated that youth in most communities in Rift

Valley assume adult roles of fending for their families while the girls are married off soon after dropping out of formal education.

Speaking during the launch of Vijana na Ujuzi at a Nakuru hotel, she added that lack of financial support, employable skill and employment opportunities further complicates their lives.

"We anticipate to reach 2,000 youths and enhance training opportunities in vocational skills such as electrical and electronics technology, motor vehicle mechanics, hair dressing and beauty therapy, fashion and design and carpentry among others," she said.

Ms Sindavi said her organization would achieve the project goals by reinforcing and revitalizing youth polytechnics through provision of appropriate textbooks, tools and equipment and computer

facilities.

Through the project, HMDS will also facilitate management capacity building for Boards of Governors and advance career training for instructors.

The youth polytechnics that will benefit from the project are Ndumu Dam, Njoro, Cheptiech, Saptet and Kagoto all in Nakuru North, Njoro and Keringet districts.

Ms Sindavi said selected students will be given start-up capital, tool-kits and machines to help establish small scale businesses.

She added that the selected students will also undergo competitive entrepreneurship training after they graduate from their respective youth polytechnics.

Ms Sindavi said the project would also touch on other issues affecting the youth such as HIV/Aids and drug abuse.

Tight security for crime prone Misikhu market

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE Government recently opened a police station at Misikhu market in Bungoma East district in a bid to curb insecurity in the area.

Speaking during the opening ceremony Bungoma East District Commission (DC) Aden Keto admitted that there has been rampant insecurity at the market and its environs.

Keto, however, said the Government is determined to stamp out insecurity not only in Misikhu area but also in other parts of the district. The DC, who is also the district security chairperson promised to deploy police officers to all insecurity prone areas in the district.

The DC, asked area residents to cooperate with the government in security matters saying the police

officers and other security agents may not know the criminals and their hide-out.

He challenged area residents to volunteer valuable information that could lead to arrest of terror gangs to security agents.

"These people are in your midst and you know them. The police officers we have deployed here today will only apprehend them with your support," the DC said.

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Dismal use of certified quality seeds costs farmers in East and Southern Africa

By HENRY OWINO

The current food insecurity in most African countries is being attributed to dismal usage of certified quality seeds by most farmers leading to poor harvests.

Some of the major challenges identified include low adoption of seed technologies by farmers, stringent seed regulations, restricted cross-border seed movement and technologies, poor infrastructure, lack of reliable data on seed trade informed decision, expensive finances services, counterfeiting of seeds, inadequate protection of property rights among others.

AFC gets big cash boost from state

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Government plans to channel Ksh 2 billion through the Agricultural Finance Corporation to farmers to help boost their agricultural output. Agriculture Minister Dr Sally Kosgey says the money will soon be disbursed to farmers to increase their yields.

The minister now wants farmers to take advantage of the allocation and apply for loans through AFC whose interest rates remains at a low of 10 percent as compared to other financial institutions which lend money at 30 percent interest rate.

Speaking in Chogoria, Tharaka Nithi County during the official opening of Agricultural Finance Corporation in the area, the Minister reveals that the government has revamped an additional six branches in the country to directly benefit farmers.

"We have opened six new branches of AFC to bring the branches to 42 and we will continue until we reach to all the forty seven counties of the country," she says adding that the new AFC has improved services to benefit the farmers. Kosgey at the same time points that each AFC branch has been allocated Ksh 100 million up from Ksh 17 million to increase farmers to credit.

"Our aim is to reach a customer clientele of 150 000 by next year, so as to boost the food security and help in the reduction of poverty levels in the country," She says adding that agriculture is a major contributor to the realization of vision 2030. The minister pointed out that the corporation has also introduced a new loan facility dubbed stawisha which targets women and the youth who are interested in farming.

Beneficiaries, she says will not require any collaterals adding that many youth and women are unable to secure loans from financial institutions due to lack of collaterals such as log books and title deeds.

Dr Kosgey further says that farmers will also be supplied with fertilizers at subsidized rates to help increase their productivity.

The minister also called upon the farmers in the area to plant drought resistant crops such as sorghum, millet, cassava and other crops that can survive the erratic weather conditions in the area.

To avert this scenario, the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) is committed to save the situation by ensuring that all farmers have access to affordable and reliable supply of high quality seeds and planting materials in Eastern and Central Africa.

This will be done by supporting the interests of the private seed industry in Africa to supply farmers especially smallholders with seeds that are of high quality and compatible to local region's weather conditions, soil sample and sufficient to farmers.

The gains include a boost of productivity to smallholder farmers to pave way for meaningful investments in the food/feed value chains and accelerate trade in Africa.

These remarks were made by the Secretary General of AFSTA Justin Rakotoarisaona, during the launch of the Alliance for the Seed Industry in Eastern and Southern Africa (ASIESA) project at a hotel in Nairobi, Kenya.

Rakotoarisaona stated that in order to spur growth of the seed industry in COMESA, the AFSTA is recognized by the African Union as

the apex organization representing the seed industry in Africa. He explained it is for that reason the "we together with the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) created a public-private partnership known as ASIESA".

"AFSTA has grown and today it is positively recognized as an apex seed organization representing the interests of the private seed industry in Africa. The food insecurity in most countries in Africa can be sorted out if farmers are well trained on variety of seeds that are compatible for particular region some which are certified for specific areas to the farmers," expressed Rakotoarisaona.

The goal of ASIESA is to develop a viable, competitive and sustainable seed industry that improves company and seed value-chain performance to ensure farmers have affordable, timely and reliable access to high quality seeds and planting materials that would boost yields for food security and wealth for farmers.

The alliance now aims at developing the seed industry in the region by improving capacity and competitive-

ness of AFSTA member seed companies to develop new high-yielding seeds and market them nationally and in the neighbouring countries.

In addition, it also targets to improve agricultural productivity in Eastern and Southern Africa in particular and Africa in general.

"Funding for ASIESA has been provided by USAID, CropLife International and Syngenta Foundation. This initial funding has enabled us to design the project, set priorities for each target country and officially launch the project," Secretary General of AFSTA clarified.

The Secretary General hinted that although ASIESA is designated to be implemented in all the 19 COMEAS countries, for a start, it will focus its activities in eight countries including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Malawi, Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Rakotoarisaona emphasized to the representatives present in the two days' workshop that the success of the first phase is expected to inform decisions on how and when to scale out the project to remaining COMESA

countries.

ASIESA vows to improve communication with farmers by leveraging various approaches and best practices such as product demonstrations, field days, extension, educational poster, the mass media articles, seeing-is-believing tours and exhibitions.

It will not only demonstrate the benefits of planting high quality seeds to farmers but provide them with adequate, accessible, relevant and timely information.

AFSTA and COMESA believes that agricultural productivity in Africa is low compared to other regions due to dismal usage of certified quality seeds among other factors by farmers on the continent.

ASIESA is here to strive for improvement of efficiency of AFSTA and National Seed Trade Association (NSTAS) so that farmers can contribute effectively towards implementation of regional seed policies and regulatory agreement to stimulate predictable market and investment business investment decisions.

According Johnson Irungu, Director of Crops Management in the Ministry of Agriculture, the ministry is committed in supporting the new credible initiative launched aimed at improving access to quality seeds by farmers.

Irungu pointed out in Kenya for instance, agriculture contributes 24 per cent of the GDP and 60 per cent of export earnings. He added through links with manufacturing, distribution and seed related sectors; agriculture indirectly contributes a further 27 per cent of the country's gross domestic profit (GDP).

"About 80 per cent of Kenya's population lives in the rural areas and drive their livelihoods largely from the agriculture sector. This is why agriculture sector section of Kenya Government's economic blueprint Vision 2030 underscores the centrality in reducing poverty, creating employment and improving the health of the people of Kenya," Irungu observed.

He argued that seed is not only the most critical inputs that determine the upper limit of crop yields but also the productivity of all other agricultural inputs which are also important business.

Irungu visualized that the agricultural outlook into the year 2050 calls for an annual increase of food production by 70 per cent with the food demand of close to 9 million people expected by then. He reminded the AFSTA that the government calls upon the seed industry to respond appropriately to the challenges facing farmers.



AFSTA members during the launch of the report. Photo/Henry Owino

March prices with cost of production, farmers told

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

AN Information Technology specialist Harun Wachira has challenged farmers to upgrade prices of their produce to reflect the cost of production.

Wachira also said many farmers have failed to take into account the money they use in production and later compare it to the amount received after selling their products thus losing business in an unimaginable proportion.

tion.

He said lack of civic education to the farmers in the country is also to be blamed for increasing poverty since most of the farmers have not been well sensitized about the new technology.

He was speaking on poverty reduction strategies at the National Council of Churches of Kenya ninth Central regional conference held at Nyeri Technical Training Institute.

The conference whose theme was

"shining the light of Christ" had over 100 representatives from Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Murang'a and Embu counties.

"A study undertaken by UNDP found out that most farmers especially in Mathira spent Ksh7 to produce one maize comb and later sold it at Ksh2. In relation to this, most small businesses practiced at the household level are liability to the country's economy hence the ever increasing

rate of poverty," he said.

As an alternative way to minimize the cost of production, the specialist urged those practicing small-scale farming to adopt a non-tillage method on their farms and only use manure and mulch during planting.

He said the method has proved productive and less expensive as opposed to the digging of farms which is done in every season and is time consuming.

By MORRIS GITHENYA

TEA factories in the country have secured 9,000 acres of land under which trees will be planted in a bid to mitigate effects of Climate Change.

Kenya Tea Development Agency, Chief Executive Officer, Lerionka Tiampati said the initiative targets about 65 tea processing factories who will acquire land to establish

KDTA responds to climate change threat

plantation.

Speaking in Murang'a County while launching KTDA tree planting week, Tiampati said about 200,000 trees will be planted under the initiative.

KTDA board member Eng Erasus Gakuya said KTDA was com-

mitted to increase the country's forest cover from 1.7 percent to internationally recommended 10 percent.

He said mature trees will be harvested and used in drying green leaves at the factories - an action which will greatly help the facto-

ries in mitigating effects of climate change.

"The trees will be used in processing green leaves," the CEO said. He said while using wood fuel to produce a kilogramme of tea costs an average of Ksh5 compared to Ksh18 while using furnace oil.

The history, tribulations of Nubians of Kibera

By HENRY OWINO

THE land saga in Kibera, Nairobi, dates back to 1889-90 when the Nubians came into Kenya for the first time from Sudan and settled at Eldama Ravine, Koibatek district in Rift Valley Province.

The community was agriculturalists and found Rift Valley Province to have a good and fertile soil for farming hence grew lots of crops.

Yusuf Ibrahim Diab is the Secretary General of Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders (KENUCE) in Kenya and explains how Nubians settled in Kibera, Nairobi. In the council they are ten executive members; chairman, vice chairman, treasury, secretary among others.

Yusuf, 62, was born, bred and is living in Kibera, where he calls home and falls under the fifth generation of Nubian families living in Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya. He is blessed with seven children who are now adults, married and have their own children as well.

Yusuf said KENUCE was formed in 2001 to deal with numerous Nubian Rights, with land issues being the most focused one due to its ever mounting pressure from other com-

Langata Road to Bomas of Kenya crossing towards where Metrological Department station is along Ngong Road through Kileleshwa back to Jamia Mosque just a skeleton map of the area. The main entrance to Kibera was where the three statues/plaques of World War II soldiers along Kenyatta Avenue {opposite Standard Chartered Bank} are located. One amongst the three is a Nubian in his full original community attire won at war.

Yusuf stated that Kenya became British colony in 1920 and when the World War II began in 1939, the British who ruled East Africa as a Protectorate and recruited more Nubians into the military for the war. The main barracks was situated at Buller Camp now known as Kenyatta National Hospital. Kibera became a no going zone since it was set aside for military and soldiers training camp and meeting point most of whom were Nubians recruited from Sudan.

Yusuf recalls that his father who participated in both wars told him that anybody who lived in Kibera that time, was either a military officer or a retired soldier all of who were Nubians. Luckily or unluckily Nubians due to their nature and lifestyles of war-

rent houses to live in. The first and original settlers of Nubians were 500 families only and almost all except women and children were involved in the war. The environment was good and fertile except for water problem but had perennial rivers.

Everybody wanted land in Kibera because of its proximity to the downtown today city centre.

In those early years, people who came to Nairobi from rural areas without jobs were advised to settle down at the closest place to city centre which was Kibera estate and again cheap in terms of house rent that cost Ksh 15 per month. The Nubians were not given title deeds by then government as Kibera residents and the land was considered as a commercial land not for occupancy by individual communities. Most people in the government especially the Provincial Administration officers misused their powers and pushed to acquire huge plots of land at the expense of the poor and ignorant Nubians considered as foreigners.

In late 1940s to early 1950s other communities led by Kikuyu began streaming in Kibera as business people but the main reason was due to



Kenyan Nubians still treated as foreigners-the 43rd Kenyan Tribe.

tual owners of the structures or land.

When Kenya got its independence in 1963, Chiefs and Provincial Administration officers began selling the houses and land they had grabbed to people who had money then without recognizing the Nubians. Many bought the land and houses most of whom were government officials and they began building permanent houses and renting them to other tenants while in the process, displacing Nubian community.

Since Nubians are people who live in colony or communal type of setting, they could not let themselves to be scattered but stayed together knowing that Government would intervene and compensate them some piece of land. To the Nubians surprise, the government only issued title deeds to the public amenities they had built like mosques and burial cemetery and not to individual plot or land title deeds to date.

"I know Nubians identify themselves as citizens of Kenya. The problem is when it comes to dealing with other communities or with government officials. The difficulties start there. Having to live in an area or a place that is considered a slum, one that does not even appear on maps as a settled area, this creates a problem. If that was not the case, I think we would have had a chance to advance our cultural identity even more and could be a big boost to the community. Any community becomes confident when it is recognized by other communities they live with in harmony and tranquility," Yusuf explained.

Nubian community has pushed and tried all means so that they are issued with title deeds to authorize them as the real owners of the plots/land they live in today. The Nubians community feels that government had neither taken their lamentations seriously nor recognized them as Kenyans since independence. The Nubian community says it is neglecting by past and present government that other communities come in at Kibera and build temporary structures anywhere, anyhow and anytime without giving room for road access, water pipes, among other essential human needs in a community.

Yusuf said due to lack of title deeds and people not being allowed to build permanent houses, temporary structures have increased rapidly forming slum. He regretted that Kibera that means a forest has turned to

the biggest slum in Africa not water tower. In his analysis, most houses in Kibera today are built and occupied by other communities except for the few permanent houses built by City Council of Nairobi. Few individuals who managed to build storeys the rest are structures confined together without proper arrangement leading to congestion hence slum.

"Today you see somebody just build any structure even on the path to your house and if you ask why, the answer is always Nubians have no place in Kibera and should go back to Sudan. This has been the land conflict between Nubians and other communities living in Kibera so, unless the government issues us with title deeds as genuine owners of the land occupies, the problem would still persist," Yusuf poses.

According to Opete Opete who has lived in Kibera for over 30 years now, the land in Kibera belongs to the government who has the title deed and not any other community. He said claiming to own whole of Kibera yet there are over 10 ethnic groups living together is not true.

Opete said if Kibera land could belong to Nubians alone, then the government could not be doing the slum up-grading which is very modern and wise way of eradicating the congestion. He admitted Nubians were the first to settle in Kibera and fought for independence but that should not be the excuse to demand for title deeds as the rightful land owners.

"This land was there before the Nubians come from Sudan and it belonged to colonial British who left and government took the control of it so, Nubians should understand that nobody owns the land in Kibera but government," Opete said.

Opete reiterated that the Kibera land saga in would be resolved as soon as the slum up-grading houses is completed and the Land Bill in the constitution is fully implemented as laws in Kenya. He added that as Kenyans wait for Bill to be Act of parliament, Nubians and all other communities living in Kibera should stay in harmony as brothers and sisters.

He said good things are on the way coming to befit all communities regardless of the race, tribe, gender religion and community. The influential leader states that he is ready to defend Nubians' rights in Kibera as before as he plans to get back political office as he plans to get back political office as councilor next general elections.



Nairobi's largest slum, Kibera, is largely populated by Nubians.

Photo/File

munities among other rights. He said any Nubian who has attained the age of 50 years is qualified to join the council.

KENUCE Secretary-General said when Nubian arrived in Kenya towards the end of 19th Century from Sudan and settled in Rift Valley Province, the British handpicked the Nubians to recruit as soldiers during the World War I to fight against its opponents like Germans. Since Nubians were war oriented by nature more were recruited into the military force. With time, all soldiers in the British army were Nubians and later on transferred to Nairobi considered as central place for the combat.

In 1902 Kibera was established as the base for training the British soldiers who by now were mainly Nubians. The land covered an acre of 4,197.9 thus from where Jamia Mosque in Nairobi City centre is located cutting across Madaraka-

like made them to fit well hence occupied the whole of Kibera together with the British.

The rest of Africans lived mainly in Eastland estates like in Makongeni, Kaloleni, Mbotela, Makadara, Bahati plus others and house rent was Ksh 60 per month while the government officials and White settlers lived in Karen, Muthaiga, Parklands, Westland and Lavington that were well built but a little bit expensive for African who being underpaid by the British.

"All Nubians look at Kibera as their homeland for the whole community. Having come here more than perhaps 120 or 130 years ago, we lost all connection with the original country which is Sudan. And there is no other place we consider home than Kibera where we have lived all these years," Yusuf said.

The white settlers grew tea and coffee in Karen and Muthaiga estates where they built modern and perma-

its cheap house rent and closeness to city centre. Agitation for independence began in early 1959 that were accelerated by low payment to the Africans, Nubians being among them by whites. Nubians who worked in KBS as drivers, railway employees, cleaners fueled the change. Kibera was guarded place and nobody was allowed to access it without permission from the government so, politicians took the advantage and used it to hold secret meetings to that ended to be Mau-Mau war.

Realizing the African agitation to rule by themselves, the British Housing Commission officials began demarcating the land by issuing small plots and houses to Nubians regardless of how big one had owned the land in terms of acreage. The British did not allowed anybody to build permanent houses except for temporary structures and none was given title deeds to approve that they are the ac-

ASARECA to fund fish farming research in EAC

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) has earmarked Ksh 6 billion to facilitate fish farming research in three East African Countries.

The programme coordinator Jean Ndikumana says the funding will be channeled to research organizations in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to help improve fish breeds in the region.

The Fisheries PS Prof Micheni Ntiba says that the funding will go a long way in enhancing the capacity of farmers who still rely on traditional breeds and methods of farming.

"With the funding from ASARECA, we expect farmers get the knowledge on fish farming to increase the production" added the PS.

The funding will oversee research during phase one of the project which is slated to last two years before the implementation of the second phase that will run for two more years.

Ntiba pointed out that the private sector is to be roped in the project to assist in capacity building.

Marine director Dr. Kazungu said that the marine institute will act as the lead agency in research and intends to ensure that farmers are provided with quality feeds and fingerlings under the project.

The project is set to reduce fishing activities in the oceans, lakes and rivers while enhancing food security, creating employment and wealth. Under the project Tilapia and Cat fish are expected to increase to 200,000 Metric tonnes.

The government has already put up cooling plants in Rongo in Migori and Imenti South in Meru. Two similar projects are ongoing in Tetu in Nyeri and Kakamega to preserve fish for longer periods and cut on losses which previously hampered growth in the sector.

Meanwhile, the government plans to train fish farmers on how to breed male fish to ensure constant supply of fish in the local and international market. About 150 farmers from across the country are targeted for the training which is meant to boost fish farming initiated under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP).

The training is scheduled to take place at the national aquaculture research development and training center in Sagana Kirinyaga County.

Fisheries PS Prof Micheni Ntiba said farmers are to be trained on the production of male fish which will be reared alone to boost quality.

Prof Ntiba explained that when fish are mixed in a pond, the male spend most of their time reproducing while the female spend most of the time laying eggs and protecting the young ones



Prof Micheni J. Ntiba, P.S Ministry for Fisheries officially opening the fish farm in a past function.

hence affecting their growth and quality of meat.

"The trained farmers will be expected to produce certified male fingerlings in their respective localities and supply them to other farmers locally. The government will make sure that only certified fingerlings are produced so as not to frustrate farmers" added Ntiba. He

noted that the ministry will also maintain a brood stock of female fish to produce eggs for reproduction purposes.

The permanent secretary noted that many countries that have achieved medium income status in the world rely on fish to drive their economies.

He however called on all the stakeholders in the fish industry to partner

with his ministry to ensure that they create awareness about fish across the country.

Ntiba added that in the last three years Kenya has made tremendous progress in the production of fish and stands at number four in Africa. "We are geared to become number one soon" added Prof Ntiba.

The forgotten class of smallholder farmers in Africa

By HENRY OWINO

ALTHOUGH agriculture remains a major economic mainstay for many countries in Africa, it has not received the necessary intervention to drive the economy.

A report outlining agricultural progress in Africa argues that while urbanization may be gathering pace and new growth sectors emerging in manufacturing, mining and services, two out of every three Africans continue to depend on farming with women forming the highest percentage.

The report notes that apart from providing jobs and food for rural populations, Africa's farms also supply urban areas with food. "However, a large percentage of farmers in the continent are still regarded as small holders with completely no impact as far as food security is concerned," reads the report in part.

The report underscores the need to unlock the productive potential of Africa's farmers to help strengthen economic recovery. "These would raise incomes, create jobs, and new markets, open new opportunities for investment and link farmers to opportunities that strengthen the two-way interaction between growth and poverty reduction," adds the report.

In countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya, every percentage point of agriculture growth, reduces the incidence of poverty as twice the rate of growth in other sectors. A more vibrant agriculture would provide a secure foundation for food security especially if women are empowered financially to large scale farming.

The report warns that Africa's



A team of Africa Pannel during the launch of report. Photo/Henry Owino

strong economic growth trajectory which aims to see the region increase the pace of growth well beyond five per cent over the next two years, is at risk because of rising inequality and the marginalization of whole sections of society. The section represents women.

Caroline Kende-Robb, Executive Director of the Africa Progress Panel, said Africa is rising and African economies are growing faster than those of almost any other region in the world. She however, regrets that the current pattern of trickle-down growth is not benefiting enough people.

"Indeed benefits measured by poverty reduction, maternal health and childhood survival fall short of what Africans have a right to expect.

The report calls for renewed focus on jobs, justice and equity to ensure that Africa's impressive economic growth is translated into shared growth for all Africans," explains Kende-Robb.

Kende-Robb further stated, the report notes that Africa has seven of the world's fastest-growing economies, with 70 per cent of Africa's population living in countries that have averaged economic growth rates in excess of four percent over the past decade.

However, the report also notes that most countries may not realise the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, flagging slow progress in areas such as malnutrition, child survival, maternal health and education.

The need for equitable growth is more critical, the report states, be-

cause of Africa's 'profound demographic shift', which will see the continent's population double in three decades and continue to rise into the second half of the twenty first century.

The report highlights that today there are 70 million more Africans aged under 14 than there were a decade ago. Over the next decade that number is expected to rise by another 76 million.

In Kenya inequality levels still rank among the highest in the continent. The report points out that the richest ten per cent of the population control almost 40 per cent of wealth in the country.

The report calls for a 'relentless focus' by policymakers on jobs, justice and equity to ensure sustainable, shared growth that benefits all Africans regardless of gender/sex, age and social status.

Kende-Robb warns that failure to generate equitable growth could result in 'a demographic disaster marked by rising levels of youth unemployment, social dislocation and hunger.'

She emphasized that Africa's governments and development partners must urgently draw up plans for a big push towards the 2015 Millennium Development Goals adding that women must be fully involved in the plans as the key developers.

"Unlocking productivity gains will require new thinking, new approaches to public spending and strong political leadership. Governments will therefore need to invest in infrastructure that makes it possible for smallholders to compete in markets," advised Kende Robb.

The African governments need to invest more in research and de-

velopment that is relevant to farmers working with low levels of inputs in rain-fed conditions, so that new seeds, fertilizers and technologies become tracts available.

The governments also need to strengthen soil and water management systems and on the other hand, stop speculators buying up large tracts of land which are never fully utilized.

About 80 per cent of Africa farms operate under rain-fed conditions whereas in drought prone environments rely on irrigated agriculture meaning productivity cannot be increased due to expenses.

Farmers mainly struggle to raise yields due to lack of inputs of improved seeds, new technologies and pesticides." The end results is that most smallholders who in several occasions are women are unable to produce enough food to meet household needs, let alone respond to the market opportunities created by rising urban demand," adds the report.

Dr. Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations and Nobel Laureate, who chairs the panel adds that Africa is on its way to becoming a preferred investment destination and a place of immense innovation and creativity.

The chair however, says there is also a long way to go and Africa's governments must as a matter of urgency turn their attention to those who are being left behind like smallholders most of who are women.

"I believe Africa and its leaders can rise to this challenge. If they do, Africa will become more prosperous, stable and equitable. This is a prize which we all, wherever we live, will share," Annan hoped.

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

The DC met officials from

Kinyua said detectives led by Kitale Criminal Investigation Officer Mr. Paul Wachira raided the home at Endebess and impounded

“We are not going to rest until those involved in the manufacture of the fake seeds are punished and we assure farmers that security measures have been put in place

“It is true some farmers have complained to the district agriculture office over germination but the number is minimal. We hope the fake seeds did reach most farmers,” admitted the DC. Farmers urged the government to distribute the seeds through legitimate organizations such as National Cereals and Produce Board and Kenya Farmers Association to check on the circulation of the fake seeds.



Kenyan maize farmers now suspect they were sold fake seeds.

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

The two were speaking during the launch of the new Embu ASK committee in Embu.

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

He at the same time says the Board was currently awaiting the outcome of a court case before

“Busia county is blessed with resources that when fully utilized will definitely help improve our socio-economic status,” said the association, adding that leaders from the region should put aside their differences and self-interest and work as a team for the betterment of the county.

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Cassava still the food security crop of choice in Teso

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

CASSAVA is an important staple food for consumption and a source of income for farming communities in Teso district, a study has revealed. The crop is grown by nearly every farming family.

According to research, most farmers in the region at least have the plantation in their farms, where locals prefer the crop to other crops such as beans, maize and bananas.

Stephen Pamba 26, a farmer in Ang'orom area of Teso South District says that cassava is a drought resistant and tolerant crop that can grow on marginal soils. "This crop is a major staple food in our community and it provides a basic diet for most of the locals". He told reject.

Cassava which is botanically known as *manihot esculenta* is also referred to as 'mogo' by the Teso. This crop well known for its starchy tuberous root is a major source of carbohydrates. "This plant gives the highest

yields of carbohydrates per cultivated area among other crop plants," adds Stephen as he leads me through his vast cassava plantation.

"Whereas it is a staple food in the region, I was meant to understand that the crop is also cultivated as an animal crop in the area," adds Geoffrey Mafura, a field officer at the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI).

He says that due to the high competition of livestock and human over maize, KARI highly recommends that cassava be planted as livestock feed, owing to its high carbohydrates content.

During this rainy season, farmers in the region planted the crop using traditional methods.

"Varieties can be intercropped during the first three months before the plantation forms a canopy," Mafura explains.

The crop is also known for its ability to produce high yields where other crops fail and thus many farmers believe that soil fertility is not important

in cassava production.

During the dry season, the crop is readily available in farms and in the local market at affordable prices. A professional from KARI says that this has highly contributed in the alleviation of poverty.

Cassava is classified as sweet and bitter, just like any other root and tuber crop and contains anti-toxins. Although cassava is generally consumed as boiled roots, most of the locals prefer using it as flour for making ugali. I had a chance of enjoying a sumptuous meal of the brown ugali during my interview with a local.

Judy Asere, a mother of four says that she enjoys the ugali made out of cassava flour than the common maize flour.

"I have to prepare this for my family every evening, a culture we've adopted because of the nutritional content," she says as she serves me with a plate of the ugali and traditional vegetables.

However, boiled cassava must be prepared properly before consumption since improper preparation can leave enough residual which in turn causes goiter and can also result to partial paralysis, "the field officer warns.

However, the more toxic cassava varieties are preferred by farmers in Teso south region because according to them they deter pests, animals and thieves.

Cassava is the second largest crop after maize in terms of production in the area. Together with yams and sweet potatoes, these crops occupy an important position in the agricultural economy in this region and produce about 40percent of the agricultural gross domestic product.

Nutritionally, cassava is comparable to potatoes except the fact that it has twice the fiber content and a higher level of potassium. In most of the plantations in the area, the shrubby plant grows to about 2-2.5 meters and the leaves vary in shape and size.

The diseases that mostly attack cassava are cassava bacterial blight, cassava anthracnose, cassava brown streak disease and cassava mosaic disease.

In the late 80's and early 90's, cassava mosaic disease wiped out most of the crop. In 1998, KARI imported two varieties; mygera and SS4 from International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Uganda (ITA) and gave out the planting materials to farmers in order to try and find out solutions for the problem.

Thugs behind computer thefts nabbed

By MORRIS GITHENYA

Five suspected criminals believed to be part of a syndicate that has been stealing computers in government offices and learning institutions have been arrested in Nairobi.

The gang was intercepted in Kariobangi area of Nairobi after a signal from a mobile phone provider led police to their hideout where stolen computers were recovered among other items.

Several schools and public offices across the country have been broken into by the gangster. The stolen computers are suspected to be sold across the borders owing to the ready market.

The same gang raided Saba Saba Catholic Parish and made away with two laptop computers that belong to the church. Arrest of the gang comes a week after Internal Security Minister, Prof George Saitoti, ordered police to arrest the terror gang.

Catholic Bishop James Maria Wainaina protested to Saitoti when he visited Gaturi Catholic Church at the rate at which the gang was raiding learning institutions and killing guards before vanishing with computers bought by the government.

Murang'a East DC, George Natembeya, said detectives from Murang'a arrested the suspects and recovered computers, music systems, mobile phones, digital cameras and sports kits belonging to Nginda Girls High School, Maragua district.

Accompanied by the District Security Committee members, Natembeya said a prime suspect linked to the theft was still at large. "The suspect is said to be buying computers from the gang," said Natembeya.

He said once police is through with investigations, the suspects will be charged with violent robberies and murder. A mobile phone found with one of the suspect is said to belong to the watchman at Catholic Church sponsored Gaturi Girls Secondary School whose was killed at the institution where 16 computers were stolen.

Several government offices and secondary schools in Murang'a and other parts of the country have been broken into and valuable items amounting to millions of shillings stolen.

A week ago, the gang broke into Murang'a Youth Affairs Offices stealing three computers. In Murang'a South district three officers, education, livestock and youth affairs were broken into in a night and 14 computers taken away.

Good news to diabetic patients

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

DIABETIC patients can now have a reason to smile following the launch of a project seeking to reduce the cost of insulin in the country.

The project which was launched in Nyeri County is a partnership between the Danish government and the Kenya Government to reduce the cost of treating diabetes.

The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation and Novo Nordisk, a major manufacturer of insulin in the world launched a pilot project at Mary Immaculate Hospital in Nyeri County.

The project focuses on streamlining the supply chain system for insulin to make it accessible to the poor by reducing the retailing price of insulin from Ksh1, 800 to Ksh500 in Nyeri and Dagoretti.

The President of Novo Nordisk Lars Rebien launched a Diabetes programme dubbed "Bottom of The Pyramid Project" at the hospital based in Mweiga town which will see 27 health centres benefiting in Nyeri and Nairobi counties.

"We are ready to support the project until we see unto it that we eradicate the disease. We are supplying what is needed to the government and aiming to cover other countries in the world. Twenty seven faith-based health facilities in Nyeri and Dagoretti will benefit from the project that aims to reach 2,000 new diabetes patients by July this year," said Rebien.

Novo Nordisk is a global health care company with 88 years of innovation and leadership in diabetes care. The Bottom of the Pyramid Project focuses on streamlining the supply chain system for insulin to make insulin affordable to the BOP.

The project's lean and adaptive supply chain will ensure that insulin is in stock at a retailing price of Ksh 500 from the average Ksh 1, 800 from about 20 dispensing points in Nyeri County and Dagoretti division.



The CEO and President of Novo Nordisk Lars Rebien with Rev Raphael Wanjohi (right) and Mary Immaculate Hospital administrator Veronica Rukunga during the launch of the Diabetes programme dubbed Bottom of The Pyramid Project at Mweiga town in Nyeri County.

"A key lesson from our past engagement is that we will only succeed through collaboration. In this collaboration we will find ways to bring diabetes treatment and insulin to patients by leveraging already existing supply chains, health care facilities and the public sector," said Rebien said during the launch.

The project implementation is a collaboration between the Novo Nordisk, Faith Based health facilities, Ministry of Health and the Danish Embassy. In addition, the project foresees training for medical personnel and patients associations by the Ministry of Health.

Under the collaboration, health workers are being trained to manage the disease that according to the Diabetes Association of Kenya is estimated to affect 1.2 million people. With current trends, this

number is expected to rise to 1.5 million by 2025.

Together with other non communicable diseases, diabetes is now a threat to national development as they often result in long complications that are usually very costly to treat.

According to Novo Nordisk, type 2 diabetes accounts for more than 95% of all diabetes cases. To avoid facing a global pandemic, populations have to take serious measures in leading active healthy lifestyles and eating healthy.

The main diabetes symptoms include extreme thirst, fatigue and frequent urination which if left untreated, diabetes may result in coma and ultimately death. However, people with diabetes can live normal, healthy lives by combining the elements of diet, exercise and medicine along with regular blood

glucose testing.

The major threat to management of diabetes in Kenya is the prohibitive cost of medication. According to the Diabetes Management and Information Centre, the average annual cost of caring for a person with Type 1 diabetes is Ksh20,000. Between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of this cost is for the purchase of insulin, making the drug unaffordable to 60 per cent of the patients.

This burden is in most cases passed on to families and the community with untold retardation of economic progress and eventually exacerbating poverty. The Ministry of Health estimates that 1.2 million Kenyans live with diabetes, and with current trends continue, this number will rise to 1.5 million by 2025, or about four in every 100 Kenyans.

Syokimau victims optimistic despite home demolition

By HENRY OWINO

VICTIMS of Syokimau demolition in Nairobi are not sad about what happened to them after being left homeless when bulldozers knocked down their houses about eight months ago but riding on hope. Tony Kiirinya, 33, is a victim of Syokimau demolition that left hundreds of people homeless, gasping for air and still others passed on.

Tony has decided to embrace life positively by turning lemons thrown to him into lemonade. The young man is full of life, jovial, humorous, open minded, determined and hardworking.

However, Tony always remembers Saturday morning of November, 13, 2011 because it was the darkest moment in his entire life. He watched in disbelief as bulldozers demolished his house. There was no room for negotiation, but rather he stood at the scene helplessly watching every minute as the noisy bulldozers brought down his house. "I am a victim of Syokimau demolitions but I do not consider myself as such. I see myself as a conqueror who has made it in life, but an enemy comes to take it away. Just like Job in the Bible, life is not fair, there are ups and down. I have come a long way to afford a smile, suffered high blood pressure but still I am positive in life and ready to invest again," Tony vows.

He recalls that it took him six months to build the house which was demolished in forty minutes, turning his life awful. It is paradoxical that the efforts, money, and months he spent in his house project, were all washed to the drain in less than an hour.

Tony said he may be looking brave, smart, composed and standing tall but all that lingers in his mind is not actually the beautiful home he once owned. Anyway he thanks God for everything assuming it happened with a reason. He however, admits that the grim picture of the demolition remain fresh in his mind as though it was yesterday. He had invested Ksh8.7 million in the house which he had borrowed from financial institutions. The Commercial Bank of Africa had advanced him a loan of Ksh 5.5million while the Sacco gave him Ksh 1.8million and sold three personal cars at Ksh1.5million.

"Like any typical Kenyan, I felt that my priority was to have a house where my family would call home and summoned all my saving to buy a plot at Syokimau," Tony disclosed.

The house had four rooms built on an 80 by 160 plot bought in installments term between March and April last year. To make matters worse the banks inter-

est rates has since then shot up from 14 per cent to 26.5 per cent by the time he took the loan. Tony is now repaying Ksh210, 000 monthly down from 150,000 despite lose of investment.

Tony keeps in mind on March 30th last year when he paid the first deposit which was to be followed by single month installment for the ownership of the land. This was after a thorough search at the Ministry of Lands and the County Council of Mavoko.

He cleared the remaining balance on 15th April same year and became the rightful owner of the plot upon issued with a certificate for the land.

"Life is not fair, I put all my eggs in one basket because I wanted my family to have a roof of their own but I lost it. Now again, I have to pay rent, repay a bank loan and refund money borrowed from friends," Tony regrets.

Tony wonders why the government allowed them to go ahead constructing the houses without warning them of pending demolitions. He suggested the government could have notified them in advance instead of moving in like a roaring lion ready devour the enemy.

"If they wanted the land, they should have told us. There was no recourse, all we had were the District Commissioner (DC), District Officer (DO), Officer Commanding Police Station (OCS) and Officer in Charge of Police District (OCPD) issuing threats during the demolition yet our MP were nowhere to be seen," Tony lamented.

He says when they were busy building, Mavoko County Council would patrol around the place and sometimes even ask residents to properly to put up the houses.

Tony is not alone as the demolition affected 300 households and put at risk over 5,000 people living and working in the area. He stated that all these victims were never given prior information about the demolition.

The young man is optimistic that justice will prevail. The government had contracted the Price Water Coopers (PWC) to administer an audit of Syokimau demolitions between 1st to 20th April, 2012 and victims are hopeful of compensation.

He has already submitted all the documents showing the costs he incurred to the auditor general of PWC. After evaluation, it was estimated that his house had cost Ksh 10.7 million which he said even if refunded, will never fix emotional tides he suffered.

"Even if the government compensates me, double the value of my house, it will not solve the emotional tides and stress it all caused me," Tony argued.

Tony is now busy looking for piece of land to buy but this time round, he is cautious. Right now, despite the fact of being a victim illegal plot acquisition and house demolition, Tony is extremely ambitious and wants to achieve his dream of owning a house.

The Syokimau residents are vic-

tims of land cartel officers, lawyers and brokers on the loose duping innocent Kenyans into buying illegal pieces of land that do not belong to them. The well organized fraudsters use existing title deeds to show location of the land in question.

The victim of the murky land deals admits that racketeers are so thorough in their assignment that only keen and knowledgeable persons would detect fraud. In most cases, the fraudsters sub-divide land and issue the buyers with certificates which are not in any case land documents. According to Ibrahim Mwathane, Director, Land Development and Governance Institution (LDGI), land buyers need to be careful because certificate and land title deeds are two different documents.

Mwathane wondered how people in Nairobi and other major towns rely on the certificates as the legal land document which is not.

"Certificates should not be mistaken as part of the legal land documents. Every interested land buyer should verify any documents with the Land Ministry whether genuine or not to avoid being conned and only to realize after investing heavily," Mwathane advised. He said it is very risky just to be issued with any document and walk away as the land owner. He warned people that the same land may be owned by another person with the title deeds and so the one with certificate will be defenseless in a court of law.



The Kshs223 million Nyeri Kamukunji market which was officially opened by President Kibaki recently. INSET: Musalia Mudavadi (left) with Housing Minister Soita Shitanda during the official opening of the market. Photos/Joseph Mukubwa

Tetu residents put MP on notice

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

TETU residents have said they will elect an MP who will initiate water projects in the area come the next general elections.

Speaking during a dialogue and vetting forum held at Wamagana area, the residents said they want an MP who will initiate water projects to aid in agriculture and domestic use.

The residents said every home should have access to clean piped water and water for irrigation. The over 100 grass-roots leaders also said they want a leader who will support their bid to add value to their agricultural products.

"We also want a leader who will start biogas projects using animal wastes since we have cows in every home. Let our products be sold in the local supermarket," said another resident.

The forum was organised by Nyeri Social Forum as a way to popularize the issues of leadership, integrity and vetting of Governor, Senator and Women representative.

Those in attendance included opinion leaders, women, youth reps, CBOs and representatives of farmers organizations, trade unions etc all from Nyeri County.

Group protests against demolition of Mosque ruins

By BEKADZO TONDO

A COMMUNITY based organisation in Malindi is up in arms following the demolition of a historical Mosque ruins by a family in the area to create room for farming.

The chairman of Saba Saba self-help group Chome Mumba said the Mosque and three houses affected were used by the Arabs during the slave trade business along the coastal region.

Speaking to The Link at the site, Mumba said the destruction of historical sites by developers had constrained conservation efforts.

"We formed Saba Saba self-help group last year and one of our core business was to ensure all the historical sites including the mosque ruins and the home of the Arabs are well conserved for future generations and learn about the slave trade business," Mumba said.

The CBO has now appealed to the officers of National Museums of Kenya to intervene and protect the environment from destruction. "Officers from the National Museums of Kenya need to come out and protect the ruins from further destruction and preserve it for historical purposes," said Mumba.

Plans afoot to feed hungry children in Ganze

By BEKADZO TONDO

PLAN International has embarked on an initiative to feed over 11,500 school children in the drought hit Ganze district.

Kilifi organization programme unit manager Ms Margaret Kahiga said the feeding programme is being offered to 35 education institutions mostly primary schools.

Speaking to The Link at moving the goal posts grounds at Mnarani in Kilifi town during celebration to mark 75 years of Plan International commitment to children affairs, Ms Kahiga said poverty facing families in Bahari and Ganze had forced children to drop out of school.

Children from different primary schools converged at the grounds and had all sorts of fun including game and dancing activities that climaxed with refreshments.

"Plan International is supporting feeding program in 35 learning institutions in Ganze mostly primary schools so as to retain most children in school. Majority drop out of school due to lack of food," said Ms Kahiga.

The manager said the benefiting schools were selected following reports on drought and poverty in Kilifi district by the district drought management office in collaboration with the ministry of education.

"We mainly relied on the report in the selection process that guided us

into identifying areas hardest hit by the drought in the past two years," Ms Kahiga said.

She said many girls were forced to drop out of school due to many problems including poverty, early marriages and pregnancies.

"The rates of transition among school going girls in Bahari and Ganze is low because most children are forced to drop out of school to fend for their families due to poverty," said Ms Kahiga.

Ms Kahiga said the death rate of children below 5 years are still a challenge in the survival of newly born babies in the district and said Plan International is disbursing food rations through dispensaries.

She noted that her organization is currently supplying Roka, Kizigo, Takaungu and Junju, Sokoke and Palakumi health centres in Bahari and Ganze with uni-mix.

The manager further said Plan International has been sensitizing the community on child protection, arguing that most of the children rights were being violated.

She said girls have fallen prey to sexual violence including defilement but since the members of the community has not been sensitised, such cases are not reported to relevant authorities.

"Cases of defilement are so common in this region but most of them go unresolved because victims opt for out of court settlement," said Ms Kahiga.

People living with Aids in Bunyala given relief food

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Ministry of Special Programmes through the Bunyala District Disaster Management Committee has distributed relief food to scores of people living with Hiv/Aids and orphaned vulnerable children from Ruambwa sub location in Bunyala East location.

A total of eighteen villages from Ruambwa sub location benefited from the relief supplies. Data availed to The Link by the representative of Bunyala disaster management committee in charge of Bunyala East location Jacinta Auma Mukudi indicates that the group received forty bags of rice, thirty bags of maize, twenty bags of soya beans, five cartons of soya oil and three cartons of beef con.

Majority of the beneficiaries interviewed commended the ministry of special programmes and Bunyala District Disaster Management Committee for the assistance saying that the initiative has changed their lives for the better, though the supplies are inadequate.

"The programme has changed our lives a little bit but we are still appealing to the government to consider increasing the quantity of the relief food because we are many," said Evelyn Achieng, one of the beneficiaries who hail from Mudembi village.

The representative of the disaster management committee Jecinter Auma Mukudi who supervised the distribution of the relief supplies supported calls by the beneficiaries adding that though scores of people living with Hiv/Aids from the area have benefited from the programme, the government must bring additional relief food considering that majority of the residents from the area are infected and affected by Hiv/Aids.

"Most of the beneficiaries, majority of whom are children live with their grandmothers who are either too old or sick to take care of the orphaned grandchildren," says the disaster management committee representative, adding that some people missed on the allocation.

However, Bunyala District Commissioner Abdi Khalif Ali who is also the district disaster management committee chairman said that the government through the ministry of special programmes has set aside adequate stock of relief supplies for emergency purposes.

"There is no cause for alarm because the government has set aside adequate emergency stock of relief food should there be any emergency considering the current heavy downpour that is being experienced in most parts of the country," adds the disaster chairman.

Elect visionary leaders, Kingi tells Kenya

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

LEADERS in Kilifi County of Coast region have been asked to emulate ideals espoused by freedom fighter Mekatilili wa Menza.

Led by chairman of Kaya Godhoma Mangi Mitsanze, the leaders asked the community to recognize efforts by Mekatilili in the struggle for independence.

They spoke as Fisheries Minister Amason Kingi urged the coastal people to elect visionary leaders in the forthcoming General Elections in recognition of Mekatilili wa Menza who fought fearlessly for the freedom of her people without discrimination.

Kingi at the same called for concerted efforts in uplifting education standards in the area to enable residents benefit from the numerous opportunities anticipated in the area once the county becomes operational.

Elsewhere the Kenya Primary School Head teachers Association (KEPSHA)

Kilifi chapter has launched its strategic plan in a ceremony presided over by Coast Provincial Director of Education Tom Majani at Kibarani Primary school for the deaf.

Majani decried poor education standards in the area and warned that the County might be forced to employ professionals from other Counties if performance is not improved.

"It will be unfortunate to see many of the jobs created by the County Government being taken by people from other Counties while locals remain jobless, if you fail to take education seriously," advised Majani.

He advised leaders and parents to conduct meetings on a regular basis

with teachers and other stakeholders in order to plan how to scale up the academic performance in the area.

As school managers, the PDE urged head teachers to work in unison with other teachers and subordinates for the common goal of uplifting the education standards in the County.

He challenged them to set standards for their schools and make sure they meet the target.

He urged the school heads to implement the strategic plan without delays to avoid being overtaken by events.

KEPSHA Kilifi chapter secretary Mr. Joseph Tembo Mwangome ac-

cused politicians of failing to promote education and schools in the area despite numerous requests by school committees.

Mwangome noted that many schools are in a sorry state due to lack of class rooms and other infrastructural facilities.

He said that many of the schools in the area are congested and asked leaders and the government to intervene, to enable schools cater for the ever rising number of students.

The strategic plan is a five year guideline on how KEPSHA is planning to uplift the education standards in Kilifi County.



Mr. Kingi addressing the press: He urged the coastal people to elect visionary leaders in the forthcoming General Elections.

Anti-FGM campaign pays off for girls in Nyanza

By BOB OMBATI

NUMEROUS campaigns against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Nyanza province have yielded success and increased the number of girls in schools. Western Kenya Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) Kenya program manager, Mary Kwamboka says that enrolment figures among girls had shot up from 89 percent in 2002 to 98 percent in 2008.

Kwamboka told a one day media workshop at a Kisii hotel that the girls who escaped from communities embracing FGM like Kuria district were enrolled in schools thus increasing the number of the girl-child in schools.

The officer, who organised the workshop noted that the completion rate of the girl-child stood at

72 percent against the boy child's 85 percent in the province, adding

measures have been put in place to help the girl child escape from the retrogressive cultural practice.

"The government came up with a plan that covered ten years beginning from 1999 to 2019 to stamp out FGM nationally. I urge stakeholders to concert effort to end the practice," said Kwamboka. Nyamira children's officer, Samwel Masese said according to the 2009 Kenya Demographic Household Survey (KDHS), 96 percent of girls had undergone FGM in the area, noting that the practice was being perpetuated privately in people's homes and private health facilities.

Masese asserted that the FGM Act 2011 was in force and warned perpetrators of the vice to discard it and venture into other businesses or face prosecution.

He noted that according to the Act, individuals who aid and abet the

cultural practice risk being jailed for not less than three years or fined Ksh. 200,000 or both. In the event that death occurs during FGM, culprits face life imprisonment. Robert Onsando, a human rights expert noted that over three million girls worldwide are subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) every year.

Onsando said research by World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that FGM is practiced in over 28 countries in Africa with few in Asia.

He noted that over 100 million women suffer the consequences of the retrogressive cultural practice, adding that some women were aware of the adverse effects of practice while others were unaware due to ignorance.

Some girls bleed to death after the cut while others develop complications while giving birth, which could lead to Fistula disease.

Women fund underutilized in Coast

By BEKADZO TONDO

MILLIONS of shillings allocated to Coast Province through the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) remains underutilized.

The Executive Officer of Women Enterprises Fund, Wainaina Wa Njeri says Coast women have not been applying for loans disbursed through the fund despite the high incidence of poverty in the area. "Records from our offices show that coastal women have accessed the lowest amount of money in form of loans from the fund and yet this is the region where women have been living in great poverty," Njeri said.

She challenged women to come out and apply for the loans so that they can start their own projects to support their husbands in meeting their family demands.

"Njeri said out the Ksh2 billion which the government has released to the Kenyan women in form of loans, Bahari Constituency women had only been able to get Ksh1.5 million a figure, which he said was too low. The CEO further said the fund has been facing challenges in repayments of loans advanced to women. He however said the government must train women on business management and financial control. She said the fund will now embark on extensive civic education to sensitise women on how best they can manage business.

He says that most women currently rely on their husbands for their upkeep, posing a bigger challenge for the survival of the marriages. "Many marriages breakdown daily in this country because husbands' incomes cannot meet the household financial demands and other necessities," Njeri said.

Speaking to women groups in Kilifi, the CEO, said the reason for creating the women fund was to empower women financially.

"For marriages to stand, there is a need to empower women financially so that they can assist their husbands in meeting the household demands and it is for that reason that the government came up with the Women Enterprise Fund" said Njeri.

The CEO said the living standards have gone up and said both husbands and wives need to have a source of income to sustain their marriages. She said women can be able to get loans from the women enterprises fund and start some income generating projects which at the end of the day can increase the family financial status.

"Some married men opt to run away from their families simply because their income cannot meet the family requirements and this is brought about the increasing prices of essential commodities required at homes" said Njeri.

The official said since the women enterprises fund was initiated in this country more than Ksh 2 billion has been given out in form of loans to the Kenyan women. He said over 0.5 million women have benefited with the fund adding that more women groups and individual women are going to be assisted.

Parents to face arrests in sexual abuse cases

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

PARENTS who fail to control and protect their children from sexual abuse and early pregnancies resulting in school dropout, will be arrested and charged before a court of law, a children's officer has warned.

Dishon Otuko, Samia District Children Officer, sounded the warning while addressing over 400 beneficiaries and caregivers of the orphaned vulnerable children who are in the Cash Transfer

programme at Hakati, in Bwiri location of Samia, district recently.

The children's officer lamented that, although the government is spending a total of 19.6million annually in the district on the orphaned vulnerable children, the school drop-out rate is still high due to pregnancies and early marriages.

Otuko attributed this to lack of parental care, saying it has led to a majority of the children attending video shows, disco matanga local dances, overnight prayers, night tuition and other activities that keep

the girls and boys out until late into the night.

The children's officer complained that the majority of parents and guardians are encouraging their children to dress indecently, a factor he blamed for rising cases of sexual abuse in the district.

"Majority of parents and guardians have left their children at the mercy of sex pests who have taken advantage of the situation to exploit the girl-child at the expense of education," said Otuko, adding that the rate at which girls were

dropping was higher than that of boys.

He warned, at the same time, that any parent who fails to report cases of child abuse will risk arrest. He added that his office has been receiving over ten child abuse cases per month.

"The children's office is handling over ten child abuse cases per month, adding that majority of parents whose children have been abused in most occasions fail to follow up the cases after being compromised by the child abusers," said Otuko.

Don't use our pulpit for politics, ACK warns politicians

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE Anglican Church in Kenya has banned politicians from taking political campaigns to its places of worship. Archbishop Eliud Wabukala said the church will not receive gifts from politicians or allow the pulpit to be used to spur animosity among Kenyans.

"We must embrace humility and become wiser as the country nears the General Elections. We will not allow the church to be used by politicians to attack each other," said Archbishop Wabukala at the All Saints Cathedral Church in Nairobi. "As a church, we will remain non-partisan, but politicians who want to divide Kenyans on tribal lines should be discouraged at all costs. We are aware that some of them may not mean well," said Wabukala.

The statements by the head of the Anglican Church in the country follow an earlier resolution by several priests from Mombasa Catholic Archdiocese who warned MPs William Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta, former Civil Service boss Francis Muthaura and radio Presenter Joshua Sang, who are accused of crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court (ICC), against holding prayers in their churches.

"I, as the Archbishop of Mombasa, and my 80 priests will not allow the four suspects to hold prayers in our place. This will be tantamount to promoting impunity, which this country must abhor," said Archbishop Boniface Lele of Mombasa Archdiocese. Their colleague faithful at the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), through a newsletter to all its branches, has also directed church elders not to use the church podium to campaign for their preferred political parties or leaders. The church maintains it will remain neutral on political matters and urged its congregation to keep their political opinions to themselves.

The Anglican Church on its part said politicians will only attend church services as normal worshippers and there will be no preferential treatment. It is common for politicians to attend religious services during an election period to seek support, promote their own political agenda and attack their opponents. On their part, Retired Anglican Bishop David Gitari and former Attorney General Charles Njonjo are urging politicians to stop rallying Kenyans into tribal regions ahead of the general elections.

Doubts emerge over the future of Busia Town

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

BUSIA town, which is supposed to be the gateway to Kenya from other East African community countries, is situated in a freehold land making it difficult for experts to plan for it. This emerged during a stakeholders' workshop recently in which experts painted a gloomy picture of the town which they described as a massive slum with haphazardly put structures.

According to one of the experts, Dr. Grephus Opata of Siaga and Associates consultants firm, Busia can aptly be described as a slum despite its fame and upcoming towering buildings. Dr Opata is part of a team of about eight experts tasked with the job of bringing sanity into Busia which for a long time has had to do without basic infrastructure and other social amenities because of poor planning.

He said during the workshop that every town in the country is supposed to have an approved plan. "Every municipality is supposed to have an approved plan and it is the initiative of the ministry of local government to plan the towns," he added.

The project which was initiated in mid-last year is expected to be complete by August this year. The new plan is supposed to be forwarded to the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Lands and later gazetted as a legal document," said the director who is also a don at Moi University. The team which has been assigned to carry out feasibility studies in the town, will submit their recommendation to the local authorities ministry for approval.

If approved, the experts warned that land owners in the town would be forced to surrender their parcels of land in order to pave way for adequate planning of the town to acceptable standards. Currently the town lacks amenities such as playing grounds and other recreational facilities because most of the land is privately owned

and thus the municipality does not have space to put up the structures. Because of this problem, it is instructive to note that some individuals residing within the town have even resorted to burying their dead relatives within their compounds in the town although this is prohibited by the laws governing urban settlements.

Attesting to this, Busia mayor Imelda Obwana noted that her town planning department has been crippled and lacks the capacity to carry out basic planning because virtually all the town is situated on freehold land. Said the mayor, "this is why we are appealing to the town residents to heed and cooperate with whatever recom-

mendations the experts are going to come up with to pave way for a better place which is well planned for everybody.

The team has been collecting data and has shared it with the residents. Some of the challenges that continue to inhibit expansion plans include the absence of public and community land to create room for expansion. "Busia could be the headquarters of Busia County and there is need to create a parking lot especially for the trailers since most of them are packed by the roadside, and in case of fire, the nearest fire engine is in Tororo. This is a disaster and needs to be dealt with," Opata lamented.

The director has further noted that Bu-

sia town is haphazardly planned and the roads are horrible. Plans are underway to create social facilities and to utilize the sewerage plant which is underutilized according to Opata who termed the situation as pathetic. The land in Busia town is privately owned and neither the government nor the council can claim land for public purposes and therefore some people are likely to be affected in plans to upgrade the town. "The roads which are currently four meters wide are supposed to be expanded to nine meters. The idea behind this is to have a strategic development plan that will make the town attractive and provide for investment," Opata told *The Link*.



Aerial view of Busia town. The town can aptly be described as a slum despite its fame and upcoming towering buildings.

Elimu Sacco members tipped on loans

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

MEMBERS of Elimu Sacco have been advised to buy more shares so that they can qualify for higher loan disbursements and register improved dividend earnings.

Addressing the stakeholders during this year's Elimu sacco annual general meeting (AGM) held at the Busia County Council chambers recently, Busia District Cooperative training officer Jirus Njoga said that this will also boost the Sacco's profit margin, adding that low profit margin has compelled most Saccos to pay members minimal dividends. The official spoke as members sought to know why they have waited since 1972 to be paid only a 10percent dividend.

"The previous management was poor. They had invested a lot of the Sacco members' shares on fixed assets," said Njoga, adding that out of Ksh100million debt only Ksh5million has so far been repaid, a situation he

noted has put the Sacco in an awkward situation. The members also demanded that locals be given a priority to fill in job vacancies in the Sacco.

Njoga however said that normally Elimu Sacco advertises job vacancies where qualified applicants are invited and the best candidates take up positions irrespective of their origin.

"Elimu sacco has not been founded along ethnic basis. It is a cosmopolitan welfare outfit that boasts of country-wide membership and therefore we are members of one family," said the training officer. Njoga at the same time called upon the sacco members to own the organization saying it was the bridge to success hence the need to increase their shareholding to a minimum of Ksh1,000.

"The Sacco acts as the bridge to success and thus you must save, borrow and invest wisely because it is pure business," said Njoga, adding that improved dividend will come with time. Elimu Sacco chairman Armstrong

Oroto on his part said that the society had complied with the requirements introduced by Sacco Society Regulatory Authority (SASRA).

"The compliance means that Sacco's management cannot embezzle your savings," said the chairman, adding that fixed assets were initially being bought at an inflated price, but now SASRA will take care of the same to ensure transparency and accountability. The chairman cautioned sacco members against saving with banks saying banks have left them more poorer than they were before.

Oroto at the same time urged the sacco members to undertake other income generating activities such as fish-farming and poultry keeping considering that there is a shortage of fish in Lake Victoria. "In the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of cooperative societies especially Sacco societies. The smaller societies are on the decline, having been consumed by the larger ones due to lack of funds to serve

the needs of the members," said Oroto, adding that some power hungry leaders have tried to mislead some members to break away from established societies.

He said saccos were now encouraging members who attain the retirement age to retain their membership so as to continue enjoying benefits advanced to members. Elimu Sacco treasurer Mathews Echoka on his part said that in 2010, the society registered 11.7 percent growth in loan portfolio and a surplus of over Ksh14million before payment of interest on deposits and taxes.

The Sacco's income stood at Ksh86million against the projected income of Ksh95million. The expenditure was Ksh84.3million against the projected expenditure of Ksh91.4million. Echoka at the same time said that during the year 2010, the Sacco realised Ksh17.3 million from the front office services which fell short from the targeted Ksh21million due to the delayed operations in Busia and members' borrowing from banks.

Harleys feted for good corporate citizenry

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE secret behind business success is being tax compliant. This means remitting all the required taxes promptly, appropriately and on time. Other factors that can make your company to grow and become successful in all endeavours are staff dedication and motivation, seriousness, efficient service delivery and dealing in quality products.

According to Dr. Rupen Haria, the Managing Director of Harleys Limited,

a pharmaceutical distributing company, all the above mentioned issues, have led to the success of his company.

Harleys limited was recently feted by the Kenya Revenue Authority KRA for its prompt payments of taxes. The pharmaceutical company fulfilled a series of internal checks and procedures required by the Government's tax collector, the Kenya Revenue Authority KRA. Harleys was the only company from the entire pharmaceutical sector or industry to be feted by the KRA. Twenty

five companies, both large and small ones, were identified for the KRA's awards. "The awards were in recognition of the firm's efforts to give back to the society through Corporate Social Responsibility activities that these companies undertake," says Michael Waweru Commissioner General for Income Tax and the boss of the KRA. The presentation of the awards was witnessed by His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki and Deputy Prime and former Minister for Finance Hon Uhuru Kenyatta and a host

of other CEO's and dignitaries from different organizations.

"This is the second time Harleys limited has been awarded for this category," reveals Haria. From the entire health care sector, only the Aga Khan Hospital and Harleys limited received the awards. "We ensure that we pay our taxes efficiently and promptly so that we do business in a clean way and with a clear conscience," says Dr. Rupen. Other firms both from the public and private sectors can borrow a leaf from us," he

adds. Harleys has been in the pharmaceutical business for a long time and its presence and services are mostly felt in Western Kenya region. The firm imports and distributes medicines, medical devices and other pharmaceutical products from internationally recognized and well established research based companies. Mr. Waweru cited the following achievements as the basis for awarding the firm; creating job opportunities in Kenya, especially in Western region, regular and undisputed tax compliance, due diligence to follow the tax laws of the land, being IT compliant with KRA records and fully cooperating with KRA investigative department.

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Bills meant to usher in better management of land in the country are being debated in Parliament by the legislators before they are enacted into law, an official from a Mombasa based NGO, Ujamaa Centre, has said.

Nicholas Mrima Wanyepe said debate about land is always emotive and more often than not ends-up without solutions being provided.

"Land ownership is seen as a privilege and those who own huge tracts of land are high up on the economic ladder. This is because it is a factor of production and those who do not have it are condemned to life," he said.

Wanyepe was addressing a workshop on land issues in Coast Province held at Titanic Hotel in Kilifi town in Kilifi County. He said, 'no wonder land has remained to be the main source of conflicts among communities in Kenya yet it was the reason why Kenyans fought for independence.'

He said after independence, leaders in power and their cronies continued to grab land forcing many Kenyans, particularly in Coast Province to become squatters and attempts to remedy the situation have failed miserably.

"Land commissions have been set up by the Government but the findings have never been implemented. Coast Province accuse the colonial and subsequent governments in Kenya of historical injustices, where their land was forcefully taken, forcing them to become landless or squatters on their ancestral lands," Wanyepe said.

The Mijikenda, Taita and Ormas are a few communities that were dispossessed of their land not only by the colonial governments, but also post-independence governments through marked transactions and the process of adjudication, consolidation, registration and resettlement programmes in the re-

Bills on land management tabled in Parliament



Parliament in session.

gion.

"The Ndung'u Report, the Njonjo Commission of Inquiry into the Land Law System in Kenya, the Waki Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence and the Kriegler Commission on the 2007 Post Election Violence have all acknowledged that such feelings are the cause of ethnic clashes in many parts of the country," he said.

According to Wanyepe, the Ndung'u Report said that in the 1980s and 1990s land was illegally and irregularly allocated to senior public servants and political cronies in total disregard of public interests. The report also identified

land that was irregularly allocated that should be repossessed.

The Kriegler Report identified attempt by the Kalenjins in Rift Valley to recover what they think they lost when the Europeans forcibly acquired their ancestral land, the desire to remove non-Kalenjins and political and ethnic loyalty as the main reasons for the 2007 post-elections violence.

As a measure to resolve the problem, the Njonjo Report said as part of the process of tenure reforms, mechanisms to be provided for investigations and resolution of historical claims in Rift Valley and Coast Province be made.

Wanyepe said Taita/Taveta County is the hardest hit by cases of land alienation where land belongs to two millionaires, while all the native residents are squatters.

Land in pre-colonial Kenya was under the customary law with the distinction between rights of access and control of those rights. But when the British came things changed after the promulgation of the Crown Land Ordinances of 1902 and 1915.

The Ordinances gave the Governors powers to make grants of freehold and leasehold in favour of individuals and corporate bodies on behalf of the Crown. By 1949,

settlers who had acquired 99-year agricultural leases were allowed to convert them into 999-year leases.

"In Kenya, land ownership is divided into three legal categories. These are government, trust and private land. Government land is that which was vested in the government of Kenya by Sections 204 and 205 of the constitution while trust land is land that is declared to be trust land and defined in Section 114 of the constitution. Neither the government nor the county councils own it. Private land is land to which an individual owns a registered title deed.

But former presidents and commissioners of lands, Wanyepe said, have most often misused their offices to irregularly allocate land to their families, relatives and friends with impunity.

The local leaders in Coast Province are also to blame as they conspired with the outsiders to grab land in various parts of the region. They even through the land officials working in the area they ensured they got pieces of land and sold to up-country people.

Wanyepe said: "The cries of the local communities over land grabbing while they lived as squatter led to the formation of what the government call illegal groups such as Mulungu Nipa, Kaya Bombo, Nyuki Movement, Black Power, Congo by Force and now the Mombasa Republican Council to fight for the rights of the coastal people."

He challenged participants to read and understand the Constitution, which Kenyans voted in support of saying it will assist communities in the country. He also said that the new law allows women to inherit their husbands' properties including land.

Busia MPs demand fair share of national cake

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

TWO legislators from Busia County have faulted the proposal by the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) saying it will deny Busia County its fair share.

Budalangi MP Ababu Namwamba and his Amagoro counterpart Sospeter Ojaamong said CRA relied on statistics given by the Ministry of planning that were inaccurate and which gave low figures on the population size of Busia County.

The two said the proposed allocation for Busia County that stood at Ksh2.9 billion was far below the required figure because the substantial part of the population in the County was not factored in.

"The Commission relied on Kenya National Bureau of Statistics census report that classified Amagoro Constituency which has a population of over 256, 000 as part of Bungoma County. This denied Busia its fair allocation because the Commission used population as the key component in awarding rev-

enue," said Namwamba.

He said according to the Commission Busia has been classified among the least populated counties in the country when it should be classified among the fairly populated ones which were awarded over Ksh3 billion.

He expressed disappointment that despite lodging complains to the commission including writing a letter to the Commission chairman Micah Cheserem, the commission went ahead and published the proposals without factoring in the com-

plaints.

"I wrote to the Commission in January this year raising the red flag about the error but never received any response," he said.

Ojaamong maintained that operations and services in Busia County would be adversely affected since Ksh2.9 million was only counted for a population of 428,000 excluding people from Amagoro Constituency.

He said the idea of devolution was to ensure equitable distribution of resources and the error commit-

ted by the Ministry of Planning and the Revenue allocation Commission was likely to defeat its noble aim.

Namwamba said he would move a motion in Parliament seeking an explanation from the planning Minister as to why the census results were not rectified even after the error was detected more than three Months ago.

Ojaamong urged the revenue allocation commission to revise its formula and come down to the people and make consultations.

INTRODUCTION

THE Commission, which is anchored by an Act of parliament, seeks to provide a legal framework through which the landless poor, persons in informal settlements in urban areas, or those who have weak tenure can receive restitution for the long-standing tenure problems associated with claims such as the so called “squatters”.

According to the Act, (Section 15) the Commission has only two years to recommend to Parliament appropriate legislation to pave way for investigation and adjudication of claims arising from historical land injustices in accordance with Article 67(2) (e) of the Constitution.

The legislation will then guide in the envisaged land re-distribution of irregularly acquired land and resettlement programme proposed in the National Land Policy and the Constitution.

Basically, this gives full effect to the broad principles that govern the issue of land under Chapter Five of the Constitution, namely:

- (a) equitable access to land;
- (b) security of land rights;
- (c) sustainable and productive management of land resources;
- (d) transparent and cost effective administration of land;
- (e) sound conservation and protection of ecologically sensitive areas

The Act also entrenches a gender perspective and directs that the selection panel, the National Assembly and the President must ensure that the commission does not have more than two-thirds of members from the same gender.

Functions of the Commission

The Constitution mandates the Commission to:

- (a) Manage public land on behalf of the national and county governments;
- (b) Recommend a national land policy to the national government;
- (c) Advise the national government on a comprehensive programme for the registration of title in land throughout Kenya;
- (d) Conduct research related to land and the use of natural resources, and make recommendations to appropriate authorities;
- (e) Investigate on its own initiative or on a complaint, into present or historical land injustices, and recommend appropriate redress;
- (f) Encourage the application of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms in land conflicts;
- (g) Assess tax on land and premiums on immovable

- property in any area designated by law; and
- (h) Monitor and have oversight responsibilities over land use planning throughout the country.

In addition the Commission has powers in accordance with Article 67(3) of the Constitution to:

- (a) Alienate public land with the approval of the national and county governments;
- (b) Monitor the registration of all rights and interests in land;
- (c) Ensure that public land and land under the management of designated state agencies are sustainably managed for their intended purpose and for future generations;
- (d) Develop and maintain an effective land information management system at national and county levels;
- (e) Manage and administer all unregistered trust land and unregistered community land on behalf of the county government;
- (f) Develop and encourage alternative dispute resolution mechanisms

The Act directs the Commission to oversee the registration of all unregistered land within ten years.



Chaos emerged during 2007/2008 general election.

New commission to address historical land injustices



FAITH MUIRURI, takes a look at the provisions of the New Commission to drive as per the agreements under Dr Annan's mediated talks.

Land as a resource in the country has been at the heart of economic, social and cultural problems. Land issues have over the years culminated in conflicts that have plunged the country into civil war in the successive military elections, the post-election violence in 2007/2008. The mediation agreements particularly Agenda IV on the issue set the stage for radical reforms with a view to securing the rights of the poor, marginalized, minorities and disadvantaged groups. In this article, Our Staff Writer

Powers of the Commission

The Commission has powers to—

- (a) gather any relevant information including requisition of reports, records, documents or any information from any source, including any State organ,

and to compel the production of such information where it considers necessary;

- (b) Hold inquiries;
- (c) Enforce compliance of principles of land policy.

Membership of the Commission

A person is qualified for appointment as the chairperson if—

- (a) holds a degree from a university recognized in Kenya;
- (b) has knowledge and experience of at least fifteen years in matters relating to any of the following fields—
 - (i) public administration;
 - (ii) land management and administration;
 - (iii) management of natural resources;
 - (iv) land adjudication and settlement;
 - (v) land law, land survey, spatial planning or land economics; or
 - (vi) social sciences;
- (c) meets the requirements of Chapter Six of the Constitution; and
- (d) has had a distinguished career in their respective fields.

According to the Act, all members of the commission must have similar qualifications.

However, the new law disqualifies applicants who are either:

- (a) members of Parliament or county assembly;
- (b) officials of a governing body of a political party;
- (c) have at any time within the preceding five years, held or stood for election as a member of Parliament, a county assembly or as a governor;
- (d) is undischarged of bankruptcy;
- (e) has been convicted of a felony;
- (f) has benefitted from, or facilitated an unlawful or irregular allocation, acquisition or use of land or other public property; or
- (g) has been removed from office for contravening the provisions of the Constitution or any other

Commission set to address land and injustices

at the core of political, related ethnic clash- that almost plunged multiparty-era general 2008. The Kofi Annan on the long standing new to promoting land and historically disad- Writer and Sub-Editor, stitution with regards reforms in the sector

written law.

The chairperson and members of the Commission are to be appointed for a single term of six years and are not eligible for re-appointment.

Currently the law allows the President in consultation with the Prime Minister to appoint the commission through a selection panel comprising—

- (a) a nominee of the Office of the President;
- (b) a nominee of the Office of the Prime Minister;
- (c) a representative of the Cabinet Secretary;
- (d) two persons, of opposite gender, nominated by the Non-Governmental Organisations Council, who have demonstrated competence and capacity in matters related to natural resources;
- (e) a nominee by the Kenya Private Sector Alliance from their member organizations who has demonstrated competence and capacity in the land sector.
- (f) a nominee of the Association of Professional Societies in East Africa; and
- (g) a nominee of the National Gender and Equality Commission;

However after the elections, the law transfers the mandate of constituting the panel to the Public Service commission. Panel will then invite applications and forward the names of qualified persons to the President.

The Act directs the President to nominate the chairperson and members of the Commission from the list



President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga during the signing of the National Accord at Harambee House. Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, who mediated the Accord looks on. Photo/File

and forward the same to the National Assembly for approval. If parliament approves the nominees, the list is forwarded to the President for appointment.

However, in the event that the names are rejected, the Act provides that the Speaker notifies the President and requests for fresh nominations. The President has

seven days to submit to the National Assembly a fresh nomination from amongst the persons shortlisted and forwarded by the selection panel.

Establishment of committees and county offices.

The Act mandates the Commission to establish committees to facilitate its operations.

The commission also has powers to incorporate individuals with special knowledge and skills into the committees.

The Act obligates the Commission to establish offices in the counties and may establish other offices in the sub-counties as it may consider necessary.

The law sets out that the Commission must work closely with the national and county governments as outlined in Article 10 and Article 232 of the Constitution.



Mr. Orengo, Lands minister

Establishment and composition of county land

management boards

The county land management boards whose mandate includes managing public land are to be established in consultation and cooperation with the national and county governments.

The county land management board comprises of:

- (a) not less than three and not more than seven members appointed by the Commission; and
- (b) a physical planner or a surveyor who is to be nominated by the county executive member and appointed by the governor. Except for ex-officios, all members of the board, are to be appointed for a single term of five years and are not be eligible for re-appointment.

The chairperson of the board is to be elected by the members in their first sitting while the commission appoints the secretary.

Functions of the Boards

The boards mandate includes:

- (a) subject to the physical

planning and survey requirements, process applications for allocation of land, change and extension of user, subdivision of public land and renewal of leases; and

- (b) perform any other functions assigned by the Commission or by any other written law.

Appointment of Secretary

The secretary to the Commission is to be appointed in line with Article 250 (12) of the Constitution which requires that the recruitment process be competitive and transparent.

A person cannot qualify for appointment unless:

- (a) is a Kenyan;
- (b) holds a degree from a university recognized in Kenya;
- (c) has had at least five years experience at senior management level;
- (d) has knowledge and experience in any one of the following fields—
 - (i) public administration;
 - (ii) finance and accounting;
 - (iii) law;
 - (iv) economics;
 - (v) management;
 - (vi) land and natural resources; or
 - (vii) any other relevant field; and
- (e) meets the requirements of Chapter Six of the Constitution.

Removal of Secretary

The secretary can be removed from office by the Commission due to—

- (a) inability to perform the functions owing to physical or mental incapacity;
- (b) gross misconduct or misbehaviour;
- (c) incompetence or neglect of duty;
- (d) violation of the Constitution; or

Funds of the Commission

The commission funds include—

- (a) monies allocated by Parliament for the purposes of the Commission;
- (b) such monies or assets as may accrue to the Commission in the course of the exercise of its powers, or the performance of its functions under this Act; and
- (c) all monies from any other source provided or donated or lent to the Commission.

The legislation also aligns the commission with orders or notices on public land administration issued by the Ministry of Lands before the commencement of the Act.