

## Weak counties need time to run effectively

By HENRY OWINO

AS Kenyans embrace the devolved system of government, fears abound as to what measures have been put in place to ensure weak counties run effectively.

While it is apparent that devolution has been designed to transfer decision-making and resources from the centre to the grassroots, it is indisputable that the counties are not equal in terms of capacity and thus cannot be expected to grow at the same pace.

However, this is not the first time Kenya is implementing a devolved system of government. At independence, the same system was adopted with seven autonomous regional governments, each with the Executive, a Legislative Assembly in the form of regional assemblies and an independent public service.

For example; the city of Nairobi was an extra-provincial region headed by an elected Mayor of the City Council. However, this system was abandoned almost immediately by the KANU government which preferred a highly centralized system.

Today the country has reverted to this form of government but this time under multiparty system of government thanks to the new constitution.

Under the Constitution, there are two levels of governments created on an equal basis. These are the County and National governments. The Constitution further divides Kenya into 47 counties with clearly defined geographical boundaries. The boundaries of each of the county have been drawn by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) as provided for by the Constitution.

Despite the Constitution creating the two levels of government and 47 counties, Kenya is still a unitary state. Although the two levels are distinct, they are required to respect each other and work in harmony. It therefore means that the relationship between the two must be consultative and cooperative. Neither the County nor the National Government is senior or superior to the other.

The two governments and institutions established under them are required by the Constitution to facilitate public participation. The two levels have democratically elected representatives and autonomous political authority. The elected representatives include the senators, National Assembly members, the President, the Governors and County Assembly

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# Kenya transits to devolved Govt

By THE LINK TEAM

**I**T is all systems go as the country adopts a devolved system of government with one national government and forty seven county governments.

The new system is anchored in the Constitution. Article 6 (2) of the Constitution states that the two levels of government are distinct and interdependent and that they shall conduct their mutual functions on the basis of coordination and cooperation.

The national government on the one hand is to focus mainly on policy formulation while the county governments are to largely dwell on policy implementation.

The Constitution has also spelt out resources to be used by each of the governments in discharging their respective functions. The Constitution further envisages the transfer of some of the functions currently performed by the national government to the County governments. Also to be transferred are assets and liabilities, human resources, pension, staff, benefits of employees of the government and the local authorities and public records.

The Transition to Devolved Governments Act (see special report on Page 16) provides a framework for a coordinated transition to devolved governments pursuant to section 15 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution.

And as we transit to cooperative and consultative devolved government under the article 189 of the Constitution, it is highly anticipated that the political system which has for years entrenched nepotism, cronyism and led to an adversarial governance style is set to change.

### Transition Authority

The Transition Authority must thus entrench these very attributes in its working style, even as it navigates politically explosive issues. The Authority established in late June 2012, has been slow on the uptake, but has recently begun to register a presence. It is required to resolve many devolution landmines, a number of which were deferred by the Committee of

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**Nyeri County Governor Nderitu Gachagua takes the oath of office in a ceremony held at the Nyeri Kamukunji grounds. Right is Nyeri High Court Judge Justice James Wakiaga.** Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

**'The Act seeks to retain discretionary presidential powers contrary to the Constitution which takes a functional approach'.**

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representatives in each of the forty-seven counties.

The two levels of governments have a clear mandate to provide a range of significant services as outlined in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution. Both governments can be taken to court or take others to court. The two governments have powers to control own budget and accounts and the ability to make and enforce local legislation. Citizens access to available resources at either level is guaranteed.

The ambitious county governments therefore seek to ensure that development and resources are not skewed in favour of any regions.

In some regions, resources have been under-utilized and thus not beneficial to the residents. It is thus expected that the new leaders will focus on reviving collapsed industries such as KICOMI in Kisumu County, Rivatex East Africa Limited in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County among others. The industries are expected to generate income for the counties.

Kinuthia Wa Mwangi, chairman of Transition Authority says that most counties will take three to five years to become fully operational. He adds that transition in most cases takes time before it finally matures to the expected threshold.

“Not all counties will develop and grow at the same pace. You must understand that some regions were ignored by the previous regimes for a long time due to single party dictatorship. I am happy that the Con-

# Weak counties need time to run effectively



Municipal Council of Mombasa

stitution has entrenched devolution which will ensure that resources are distributed equally across the regions,” Kinuthia said.

He notes that some regions in Coast, North Eastern, Nyanza, and Eastern provinces are still under-

developed due to poor leadership. “Unlike Nairobi and Central province, counties in such regions will have to be assisted to bring them at par with the rest of the country,” Kinuthia suggested.

“Each county is faced with its

own challenges; infrastructure, resources availability, circulation of funds, leadership and management skills,” He clarified. Some will develop faster than others and slowly depending on the challenges and priorities at stake,” Kinuthia reiterated.

He pointed out that most provincial hospitals are now changing the status of their facilities to be referral hospitals. This is because all referral health facilities would be under the national government funding and not county.

Another area of contention is which schools shall be manned at the county level and those that would be under national government. It is however clear that all early childhood education (ECD) schools will under the county government.

According to Kinuthia, teething problems are expected on how the new structure will work but with time, this issue will be resolved. He outlined three types of counties; Rural Counties, Urban and City Counties and Counties with both rural and urban characteristics. For example, the Urban Areas and Cities Act, provides for categories of Cities, Municipalities and Towns within a County.

“We expect by 2017 at least three-quarters of the counties shall have achieved its goals and fully operational with much assistance from national government” Kinuthia asserted.

With the passage of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, the existing local authorities cease to exist. So there will be no city, municipal, county or town council clerks. There will also be no Councilors but County Ward Representatives.

## Kenya transits to devolved system of government

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Experts and the Task Force on Devolved Government (TDG) due to their explosiveness.

The authority has been keen on engaging the central government to embrace change and to disarm its natural resistance through negotiated compromise. The recently assented National Government Coordination Act 2012 is an example of this. The sole objective of the Act is to enable the Office of the President to retain the Provincial Administration under the guise of the national government administration.

County Transition process has succeeded in preparing the policy and some of the legislation to bring Counties to life. Several ministries have in turn commenced their county transition process.

Whilst achieving some progress on the policy and legislative front, the process is marred by below par performance of key transition institutions especially the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA), Ministry of Finance, Parliament, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and the Office of the President. If not redressed, these failures will undermine the effectiveness of the emerging County governments and devolution as a whole.

## Gaps

The resolve by the Transitional Authority to endorse the National Government Coordination Act in its status then was erratic and not in the spirit, letter and language of the Constitution. In so doing the Act of-

fends the Constitution on at least the following grounds.

The National Government Coordination Act fails to clarify which functions the national government administration shall coordinate below the county level. There is ambiguity on functions; the Act seeks to retain discretionary presidential powers contrary to the Constitution which takes a functional approach.

Article 186 and 187 of the Constitution provide for the functional assignment and transfer of functions between national and county government. The Transition to Devolved Government Act 2012, assigns the Transition Authority the responsibility to facilitate and coordinate the analysis and phased transfer of functions through the ongoing functional assignment process not the National Government.

The Act has pre-empted the functional assignment process and in supporting this Act the authority is undermining its own statutory mandate.

Secondly, the Act does not justify the cost of maintaining a parallel administrative structure alongside the county administrative structure especially at sub county level. Article 201 (d) of the Constitution provides that public money shall be used in a prudent and responsible way and the office of the President should be well advised to ensure the restructuring of the provincial administration does not impose a double cost burden to the Citizens.

Thirdly, Article 174 (c) gives powers of self governance to the people and seeks to enhance their participation in decisions affecting them. In supporting this Act the Transition Authority has opted for a piecemeal

approach that allows it to sidestep the larger issue of redeployment of government staff.

Unlike the Committee of Experts and the Task Force on Devolved Government before it, the Authority has launched headlong into its transition activities without providing a clear roadmap of how these will feed into the larger implementation process.

The authority has failed to identify the contentious issues which would undermine the process. These include rationalization of national government institutions, many of which must be scrapped as their functions will be taken over by the county governments and because of existing functional overlaps; the rationalization of staff, the transfer of assets; the burgeoning cost of government and need to prevent transfer of corruption to county level. The Transition Authority is ambling along dangerously under the apparent misconception that these issues will resolve themselves or that they can avoid unpopular and difficult decisions.

This is a hot matter that requires proper strategy and wide consultation to be done successfully. A county government would want to know the rationale behind phasing transfer of functions. For example why is it only Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa, Nakuru and Uasin Gishu Counties that are the first to get the health function transferred to and not Wajir.

## Assets and liabilities

The Authority is required to provide a mechanism for scrutiny of public assets and is empowered to reverse any irregular transfer of assets. The Authority has not provided public in-

formation on the status of implementation of the moratorium. It has not provided mechanism through which citizens can engage in the process. An asset stripping is rumoured to be in high gear. Media reports indicate that some local authorities plan to sell off assets to pay off debts to statutory institutions such as the NSSF and NHIF without first justifying how statutory deductions were applied.

## Human resource capacity

A policy framework needs to be formulated to guide national and county governments in organizational structure and design, workload analysis, job analysis and job evaluation have not been developed. This policy will be useful in determining appropriate organizational structures, optimum staffing and grading of positions. It should also provide a framework of uniform norms and standards for regulation of appointments, confirmation of appointments, disciplinary control and removal of persons holding or acting in county public offices.

The norms and standards shall comply with among others, Article on National Values and Principles of Governance, Article 41 on Labour Relations, Article 56 on Minorities and Marginalised groups, Article 230 on the Salaries and Remuneration Commission, Article 232 on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Article 236 on Protection of Public Officers.

Besides matching staffing with functions, other norms and standards in respect of staffing will include prescribed qualifications and fair administrative action. Others will be benchmarks in the form of ratios or

percentages that will be useful criteria in determining the number of offices to be established or abolished or the diversity of Kenya's communities in appointments. In order to ensure harmony and standardization at both levels of government, these norms and standards will as much as possible be aligned to the applicable laws and regulations in respect of staffing at the national government level, and to the constitutional provisions on public service.

The Transition to County Government Act gives the Authority the mandate to recruit the county officers in the interim to prepare for the operationalization of the County government.

Transition is a critical time in terms of assets and liabilities tracking. Experience has demonstrated that transitions are used by unscrupulous individuals to strip public assets. To prevent this there is urgent need to compile an inventory of all assets and make these lists available to the public for transparency purposes.

The Authority should have a framework that would allow ongoing public stakeholder involvement and information sharing in the Transition process to achieve among other objects:

- An inventory of and public assets and liabilities
- Ensure vetting of all public officers to be redeployed
- Regular reporting on the status of county transition
- Public stakeholder input into sectoral functional assignment policy
- Effective transition of Local Authorities
- Responsiveness to public concerns



# Multi-Choice gives e-learning shot in the arm

By MALACHI MOTANO

ACCORDING to the immediate former Education Minister Mutula Kilonzo, learners acquire digital skills best when exposed to Information Communication and Technology at a very young age which they increasingly use to explore and exploit the world of information and to craft that into knowledge.

Currently, ICT integration has received special emphasis in the Education Bill and other draft legal documents currently being discussed in Parliament

“My dream is to see our learning institutions churning out highly skilled personnel who are innovators and creators of knowledge, driving our economy using the latest technologies and competing globally in production of new knowledge and products,” he says adding that an ICT literate workforce will enable the country acquire the status of a knowledge economy by the year 2030.

He says that stringent measures have been put in place to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged by the digital divide currently witnessed in most parts of Africa.

“ICT has now become part and parcel of teaching and learning in all levels of education starting from Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) up to university level,” he added. The minister was speaking after the launch of the Multi-Choice Resource Centre at Emali Secondary School in Makueni County.

He lauds the efforts of MultiChoice East Africa for funding the centre and establishing 90 similar centers in other parts of the country, which he said would bring technology closer to the people especially those in rural communities, noting that the equipment donated to the schools would enable them to provide education that is in tandem with the requirements of the 21st Century learning skills.

“We have developed an enabling policy environment that not only spurs growth in this sector but also provides guidelines on the use ICT tools for

*The Ministry of education plans to minimize its expenditure on education to allow the digitization of the entire school curriculum by 2015, enabling students to access lessons from anywhere.*

teaching and learning and our commitment is that we shall integrate ICTs in teaching and learning at all levels,” the minister reiterated.

With your installation of Satellite Technology and provision of digital content, I am sure the communities living around here are strategically placed to participate meaningfully in transforming their socio-economic life.”

Under the MultiChoice initiative, Kenyan public secondary schools are provided with digital satellite technology and free access to the DStv Education Bouquet, which includes seven documentary, educational and current affairs channels. 25 more schools are

set to benefit from the Ministry’s partnership with MultiChoice.

According to the MultiChoice East Africa regional director, Stephen Isaboke, Technology and education can blend seamlessly as illustrated in the rapid uptake of the initiative by teachers and students over the years.

The Education Minister cited the development of digital content by KIE for the school syllabus and the continuing ICT-Economic Stimulus programme (ESP) which so far has equipped 1,427 secondary schools with ICT tools among a number of programmes aimed at equipping all schools with appropriate technologies.

The Minister says his ministry had

also established the National ICT Innovation and Integration Centre which is charged with developing and testing innovative solutions for use in schools and is also committed to ensuring that the country had the requisite teacher-capacity and relevant digital materials and enabling policy framework.

“Technology is not the focus in education but how the technology is used to enhance teaching and learning,” he emphasized.

“We are moving away from piloting projects into actual scaling up of programmes that impact positively on educational outcomes as well as retraining communities where the schools are situated”



National Museum of Kenya Director-General Dr. Idle Omar Farah (right) and KUCT Principal Prof. Ndirangu Kioni during the signing of the MoU.

## Kilifi County hit by low enrolment rates

By BEKADZO TONDO

THOUGH the enrollment of school children in Kilifi County increased tremendously soon after the introduction of the free and compulsory primary school education, the transition rates from primary to secondary schools remains low.

The many children who had abandoned school due to lack of uniforms, school fees and other school requirements streamed back to school after President Mwai Kibaki’s government made primary education free and compulsory.

The enrolment figures were also accelerated by the introduction of school feeding programs in areas hard hit by drought and poverty. The feeding programs were supported by both the government and donor organizations like the World Food Program.

The impact was remarkable and areas like Ganze, Magarini and parts of Kaloleni which had been experiencing low enrolment rates due to poverty started recording a high number of children going to school.

But this did not translate to transition rates because very few numbers of students who had completed standard eight after sitting for their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education were proceeding to high school.

In some instances, most of the children especially the girls drop out of school even before reaching standard eight. The Kilifi County education director Mr Dickson Keis confirms that the transition rates remain at less than 50 percent of the students proceeding to Secondary schools.

The director however attributes poverty facing many families to the low transition rates from primary to secondary and finally university.

“We know of cases where needy students are forced to drop out of school as their parents cannot be able to raise money required for secondary education,” said Mr Keis.

A recent survey conducted by Plan International showed that some girls drop out of school due to pregnancies while others are being married off to old rich men by their parents.

According to Plan International manager in Kilifi Ms Margaret Kahiga, most parents in the area have negative perception towards the girl child education. Ms Kahiga noted that parents prefer educating the boy children compared to the girl child.

The survey further revealed that some male parents consider their girl child as a tool of generating wealth and thus force them out of school at tender age and marry them off to rich old men and earn money in form of dowry. “Plan international carried out a survey in Ganze and Jaribuni divisions in Ganze district based on priorities parents offer to both their boy and girl child in education and it emerged that most parents favored boys more than girls,” said Kahiga

The DEO at the same time said that studies had shown that children do better at their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) but when they reach secondary school their performance starts going down, “Most of our pupils excel in KCPE but once they join secondary school their performance drops drastically,” noted Mr Keis.

However the chairman of Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) in Kilifi County Mr. Patrick Rasi blames poor performance on the shortage of teachers in most schools.

## State plans to establish more universities

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT Kibaki has said that the Government will soon establish 15 new fully fledged public universities to satisfy the increasing demand for higher education.

Kibaki noted that increasing the number of public universities was part of an expansion programme to improve access to higher education being undertaken by Government with a view to achieving Vision 2030 goals.

“These 15 new Universities have over the last three to five years been university colleges and have been affiliated with seven public universities,” said Kibaki.

He added: “The establishment of the universities was going to be a milestone in development of higher

education.”

The President was addressing 2,345 graduands while presiding over the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology graduation ceremony in Kakamega town.

Deputy Prime Minister Musalia Mudavadi, Cabinet minister Margaret Kamar, Eugene Wamalwa and Soita Shitanda accompanied the President.

At the same time, a record 7,500 graduands were awarded PhDs, Masters, Bachelor degrees and Diploma certificates at the 48th graduation ceremony of the University of Nairobi at the main campus.

This is the highest number of students that the university has graduated since its inception and the management attributes this increase to the expansion of the institution in the last ten years.

Out of 7,500 graduands, 56 were conferred with PhDs, 2351 with Masters, 4,402 Bachelors, 65 post graduate Diplomas and Diplomas 738.

Speaking during the graduation, the university’s vice chancellor Prof George Magoha said the institutions growth has not been limited to enrolment, which now stands at 62,000 students but has also extended to learning facilities and services that assure the highest quality in higher education.

“The continuing growth of the University of Nairobi is reflected in the record numbers of graduands this year.

“They are a diverse and talented group of graduates entering an array of professions.

“The large number of our gradu-

ands is an indication that the strategies used by university of opening regional campuses to cater for those who are far from main cities and town is working. On behalf of the University senate, I congratulate each of them.

In Eldoret, Bishop Cornelius Korir of Eldoret diocese received an honorary degree from Moi University for championing peace in areas affected by tribal conflicts.

Moi University Chancellor Bethuel Ogot said the institution fully recognizes the role the cleric played in fostering peace and unity among warring communities during the 2007/2008 post-election violence.

Prof Ogot said: “Korir has been on the forefront championing for peace, national cohesion and integration between communities, especially during the post poll chaos.



**M**EEET John Kinuthia. He is 15 years old and lives in Kirogocho, an informal settlement in Nairobi. As his age mates go to look for education-believed to be the key to success, the form two students in a city school also leaves for school but immediately turns to Dandora, the largest dump-site in the city.

"I normally, join men, women and children scurrying about the garbage. We don't even have gloves or anything for protection. All we have are hooks, for fishing out items and gunny bags to bring the wares to buyers.

Kinuthia then rummages through the mounds of garbage for plastics, clothes, shoes or anything that he can sell for little money. The items either make it to factories for recycling or, in the case of clothes, cutlery, electronic and the household goods, they are resold in the streets.

"I have been forced to drop out of school because my single mother can no longer afford it. Although primary education is free, parents are expected to buy uniform and desks for their children and contribute to school projects." Jemima Wambui is Kinuthia's Mother. "I wish he could go back to school.

Unfortunately I have no earnings and mainly sell chapatis to fend for my two children which is simply not enough because I have to clothe, feed them and pay the rent," she adds.

Bonventure Odhiambo is Kinuthia's neighbor, also 15 and out of school. I dropped out of school after the death of my grandmother in Western Kenya, where I was living before. I had to join my mother in Nairobi, and now spend my days watching my young sisters. There is no space in the informal settlement for them to play.

Selina Atieno, their mother, could not raise the money to buy a desk and new uniform. The school also required his birth certificate before he could be

## Poverty drive pupils out of school

In 2002, the government introduced free primary education that saw enrolment rates double. In 2007, the government further waived the tuition fee in secondary schools, a move that was aimed at making the secondary education at least affordable. Unfortunately, the current harsh economic time, makes education to remain a pipe dream to children from families with low income. *Malachi Motano* tells a story of a young boy that as his peers go to school, he goes to a dump-site to eke his living.

enrolled in standard eight unfortunately the process of getting him a birth certificate also proved cumbersome to her. Selina wishes to see her Kinuthia, her firstborn in school.

Just like Selina or Mama Othis as she is referred to also works at the dump, earning barely enough to pay rent and buy food and water for the family.

Together with their neighbours, they have no access to basic sanitation or health services; open drains along the roads flow with filth. They are lucky to have water points, but lack electricity.

John Webootsa is a local priest and Educator. "This area has only two public primary schools, serving only a small fraction of the population of this area. Parents have to struggle to send their children to the informal schools, which are privately run. This makes about 30 per cent of children in this informal settlement not to go to school at all. Most of them will end up at the dumpsite, because after all they must earn a living somehow. In fact, child prostitution and child marriage are so common here," he said.

According to urban data, wide disparities in children's rates of survival and nutritional status have resulted in unequal access to services. Yet even this information is often hard to find. Further data and analysis are needed to address the needs of these improv-



Pupils learning under the tree. Photo/File

erished and excluded urban children.

"I am therefore asking the government to allocate more resources for children in informal settlements.

UNICEF's flagship report, 'The State of the World's Children 2012' also calls on governments to direct resources and services to these children, and

to help understand the scale of urban poverty so officials and partner organizations can better address children's needs.

## Kibaki awards Kimathi university charter

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

KIMATHI University College of Technology is now a fully-fledged university after President Mwai Kibaki awarded the institution a charter recently.

The university will now be known as Dedan Kimathi University of Technology.

He said the government has embarked on a process that seeks to establish 15 fully-fledged public universities.

"These universities have over the last three to five years been university colleges, affiliated with and mentored by our existing seven public universities. I'm therefore pleased to grant Charter to Dedan Kimathi university of Technology as the first of the 15 new public universities," he said.

The Head of State added the new Universities Act 2012, which has just been passed by parliament and appropriately received his assent, marks the beginning of a new chapter in the history of higher and tertiary education in the country.

"The Act has provided for a robust environment and equal playing field for the accreditation and quality assurance of university education in our country," he said.

He further said the Act has es-



President Kibaki opens Dedan Kimathi University of Technology in Nyeri before he awarded the university a charter. On the right is Mukami Kimathi, wife of freedom fighter Dedan Kimathi. Vice president Kalonzo Musyoka on the left. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

established a strengthened Commission for university Education that is now mandated by law to ensure that access, equity, relevance and high quality of the higher education is made available to all Kenyans who qualify.

"This will ensure that our higher education system produces higher quality human capital that will be the backbone of the achievement of our Vision 2030 and the many ideals of our constitution," he added.

The president added that the

country is fully committed to utilizing Science, technology and innovation for the benefit of her citizens.

"The many world-leading innovations coming out of Kenya in the areas of mobile banking, financial transactions and other ICT applica-

tions are examples in point," said Kibaki.

He said since the university has become a fully-fledged university, he expects it will continue to drive towards making science and technology education as their core specialization.

Kibaki challenged universities and other research institutions to find ways of translating research findings into innovations that lead to the development of useful goods and services for uplifting the livelihoods of the people.

Those present during the occasion included Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka, Higher Education Minister Margaret Kamar, Special Programmes Minister Esther Murugi, assistant minister Kabando wa Kabando and MPs Francis Nyammo, Ephraim Maina and Nemesys Warugongo.

Others were Chancellor Okoth Keya and acting vice chancellor Ndirangu Kioni.

Former Freedom fighter Dedan Kimathi's wife Mukami Kimathi who was also present was happy that the university has been named after her late husband.

He at the same time directed that all roads surrounding the universities to be tarmacked for easy access to the institution.



# New education system underway

By HENRY OWINO

PLANS are underway to roll out the proposed 2.6.6.3 system of education to replace the current 8.4.4 national curriculum.

The current system was introduced in 1985 to provide pupils and students with necessary practical basic skills necessary for self-employment in vocational career.

The 8.4.4 system of education is being phased out amidst raging criticism that it was more focused to theory and passing of national examinations as opposed to equipping learners with relevant skills. It is soon going to be replaced with a new system of education to serve the current market demand in line with the Constitution educational requirements.

The new system is in its final stages of review and would provide children with opportunity to pursue a career of their choice depending on talents and abilities with practical skills. Pupils/students would therefore prosper in their respective career of choice according which has not been captured in the current system.

The 2.6.6.3 system of education requires a child to have; Two years of Pre-Primary schooling before joining Primary school for Six years (3 years lower and 3 years upper), Six years in Secondary (3 years junior and 3 years senior) and two years of middle level institutions or at least three years of University training.

The curriculum has been aligned to the requirements of Vision 2030 to equip learners with both theory and practical skills.

Currently, the curriculum does not provide enough practical skills and thus learners have been forced to enroll for middle level training.

This information is contained in the tenth edition of Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on behalf of international community; agencies, institutions, governments and other people.

The 2012 report reveals that one third of school leavers in Sub-Saharan Africa fail to complete primary school and lack basic skills for work. It emphasizes on the need to put education

to work by investing on skills that target young people.

It further explains that over 56 million school leavers aged between 15 to 24 in Sub-Saharan Africa have not even completed primary school and need alternative pathways to acquire the basic skills for employment and prosperity. This number is equivalent to one in three of the region's youth population.

Again in Africa, around two-thirds of the population is under 25 years old. In the world, an eighth of young people is unemployed, a quarter are trapped in jobs that keep them on or below the poverty line. As the effects of the global economic crisis continue to be felt, the severe lack of youth skills is more damaging than ever before.

Despite significant progress in enrolling several children in school in many countries due to Education for All (EFA) goals, the report indicates that few are on track to meet the six EFA goals set in the year 2000. The goals were declared in Dakar, Senegal and some countries are a long way

behind the schedule needed to attain universal primary education by 2015. The report was monitored against six EFA goals across more than 200 countries and territories.

It shows that most countries are not making any progress even as the target deadline draws nearer. For instance, Kenya, Ethiopia are among countries headed towards the set goals but in Nigeria, over 10 million school age children are still out of school.

Along with Arab States, sub-Saharan Africa has the worst rate of girls to boys in school of any region in the world. Women are the most in need of all. In eight African countries, over nine out of ten young women in rural areas have not completed lower secondary school. Without these skills, these women will have their life chances affected forever.

This tenth edition of EFA Global Monitoring Report shows how vital it is to ensure that all young people have the skills they need to prosper. The report however, reveals that across the world, there is a lost generation of 200 million young people who are leaving

school without necessary skills they need for the job markets.

The report looked in depth at one of the least analyzed education goals on youth skills. It says the young people need the skills taught in primary school and lower secondary schools to find decent jobs. In Sub-Saharan Africa, about 30 million children are still missing out on primary school and 22 million teenagers are out of secondary school, missing out on vital skills for future employment.

The number of young people out of school in the region has even increased over the past year. There is also a learning crisis: worldwide, 250 million children of primary school age cannot read or write, whether they are in school or not. For instance, in Ghana in 2008, around one-half of young women and one-third of young men could not read a sentence even though they had spent six years in school.

Many living in urban poverty or in remote rural communities and young women in particular, are unemployed or working for low pay. They need to be given a second chance to achieve

their potential skills and prosper or start their own entrepreneurialships.

Pauline Rose, director of EFA Global Monitoring Report, said: Education and skills for young people are the key to Africa's future development. Yet millions of young people in the region have not completed primary education, and millions more have never been to lower secondary school.

"These young people, especially women and the rural and urban poor, are not equipped to join the ambitions of many African countries to achieve middle income status in the coming years," explained Pauline Rose. "First and foremost, these young people must be given another chance to learn basic skills such as reading and skills in relevant trades. Only then can young people fulfill their potential and achieve their aspirations," she added.

Putting education to work describes how governments can give young people a better start in life so that they can greet the world of work with confidence. It also identifies the current status of funding for achieving the Education for All goals, outlining the roles that governments, donors and the private sector can play in raising new resources and using them more effectively.

Evidence based analysis in the EFA Global Monitoring report is an indispensable tool for educational policy-makers, development specialists, researchers, the media and everyone interested in tapping education's power to build a more prosperous and more equitable world.

Irina Bokova, the Director General of UNESCO said many youth, and women in particular, need to be offered alternative pathways to education, so that they gain the skills to earn a living, live in dignity and contribute to their communities and societies.

"We are witnessing a young generation frustrated by the chronic mismatch between skills and work. The best answer to the economic downturn and youth unemployment is to ensure that young people acquire the basic skills and relevant training they need to enter the job market with confidence," said Irina Bokova, the Director General of UNESCO.



Ministry of education unveils the tenth edition of Unesco report on Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report. Photo/Henry Owino

## TI rolls out trials on community involvement in education

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE education sector in Trans Nzoia County is set to benefit from an initiative that seeks to involve the community in education services to complement government efforts.

Speaking during a three day seminar held in Kitale town under the theme "Enhancing Transparency and Accountability in the Education Sector", Philip Odete of Transparency International- Kenya reveals that Trans Nzoia County is among three counties in Kenya where a feasibility study to engage the community is being conducted and if successful it will help improve the education sector.

"After research it was revealed that the education sector in Kenya suffers a lot. We therefore we came up with this forum to help us strategize and bring out clear structures of engaging the community in complementing the activities of the govern-

ment and three counties Trans Nzoia, Kwale and Nakuru were selected for this feasibility study, they have signed the education development pact and are on their way to implementing it," said Mr. Odete.

He said after the promulgation of the constitution it became clear that it is the function of the government to see to it that the right to education is actualized therefore the Transparency International Kenya Organization undertook this exercise to get the opinion of the public on the challenges facing the education sector and how best they can work towards improving the situation by bringing together all stakeholders in the education sector i.e. the community, TSC, schools and the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Odete revealed that some of the challenges raised by the stakeholders included lack of transparency in allocation of resources, budgeting and expenditure as well as deployment, transfers and promotion of teachers

and education staff.

Lack of, or poorly constituted oversight mechanisms within the institutions such as management committees, project management committees, procurement committees, Dysfunctional or lack of redress mechanisms were also the challenges he cited.

"By now for example it is not clear where corruption complaints can be channeled and how long it would take to substantively address them without any fear of victimization," he said.

Odete lamented that the public doesn't know that they have a right to access information, and how procurement should be done and therefore lack the capacity to monitor, inadequate and incompetent staff, apathy on the part of the public which he said hampers vigilance and participation in the development agenda within the education sector in Trans-Nzoia County and lack of commitment and ownership by stakeholders.

"Although the challenges that arose

were so many, we were able to come up with ways of countering them for example by promoting public involvement in the fight against corruption in the education sector in Trans-Nzoia by holding sensitization forums to share on key policies on education e.g. procurement, dissemination of information on good governance and corruption prevention measures, making publication and proper maintenance of financial records, capacity building among others" he revealed.

He added that they were also going to adopt measures that ensure citizens report instances of corruption without fear of reprisals through creation of suggestion boxes in institutions and integrity committees to take a look on the issues raised and how best to manage them and making adherence to good governance and other anti corruption standards attractive and non-adherence to the same expensive – both at the individual, institutional and sector levels.

Odete said that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which is going to be signed by the major players before its implementation was born out of the realization that long-term sustainable change is best pursued through a collaborative process of working together, in which each stakeholder benefits from the improved circumstance of the others with the goal of promoting integrity, transparency and accountability as well as improve service delivery in the education sector in the county of TransNzoia.

Those present during the seminar were administration officers, women and youth group representatives, school heads, Union representatives and education officers who promised to continue sensitizing the public through the chief baraza's, women and youth groups meetings and school committee meeting by working together with the aim of benefiting from each other.

# Nambale residents to sue their CDF managers

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

NAMBALE residents have threatened to move to court to recover Ksh 42.6 million from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee.

The residents through the "Nambale Citizen Action Group" said that they will not sit and watch as public funds are diverted for personal use.

They accused the committee of failing to consult them in the management, implementation and development of various projects in the constituency.

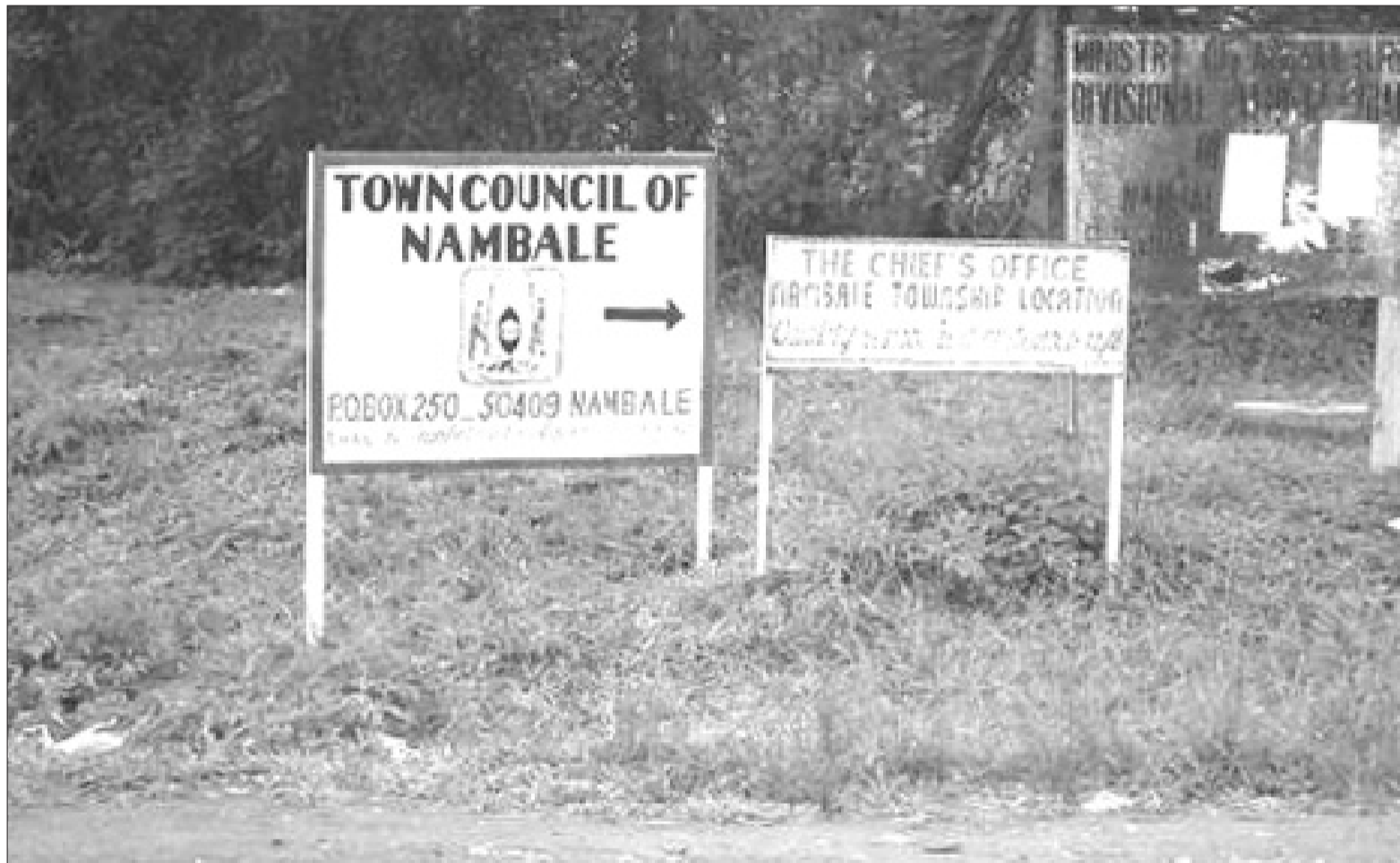
In a letter dated December 6, 2012 and addressed to the National CDF board through their lawyer and copied to Nambale CDF committee chairman and the District Commissioner, the citizen action group claimed that the committee cannot account for Ksh 42.6 million based on the National Taxpayers Association findings.

The action group is demanding the completion of all incomplete projects, recovery of all missing project funds and the availing of records of all the CDF projects plus the Bills of Quantities for the last five years.

"Failure on the part of the CDF committee to account for the said project funds, we shall be left with no option but to institute legal proceedings against the entire CDF committee and any other personality to recover the said funds," said Odima.

According to the NTA monitoring and evaluation report, a total of Ksh 7.7 million was wasted on badly implemented projects during the 2006/2007 financial year representing 17 percent of the total CDF funds allocated to the monitored projects.

During the same financial year, a total of Ksh 1.8 million was wasted on abandoned projects representing 4 percent of the total CDF funds allocated to the monitored projects whereas a total of Ksh 3.1 million was



All roads lead to Nambale but today no one was being served as the council services suffered a paralysis occasioned by striking workers demanding wage arrears of more than shs 7m.

unaccounted for representing 7 percent of the project funds.

The NTA's assessment of Nambale CDF had not only exposed poor project implementation, it had as well revealed a worrying trend of where elected leaders concentrate resources in areas that overwhelmingly voted for them during the elections.

"This is contrary to the public fi-

nance principles Article 201 which clearly states that the public finance system shall promote an equitable society and that the revenue raised nationally shall be shared equitably among national and county governments," said the statement.

However contacted for comment, the Nambale legislator Chris Okemo's personal assistant Javan

Obore rubbished the claim saying the move had been politically instigated by the sitting MP's political opponents out to soil his development record for their own political mileage.

"Nambale CDF committee has ensured equitable distribution of the CDF funds in the entire constituency. A bigger chunk of the money had

been spent on infrastructure development which include learning institutions, construction of rural access roads and bridges, water projects and health among others," said Obore, adding that the area MP who has declared interest to contest for the Busia County senate post is a development minded personality with the interest of the people at heart.

## Counties set to establish Public universities

By PETER MUTUKU

PLANS are underway to establish public universities in all counties following the enactment of the University Act 2012.

According to the immediate former chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Education David Koech, the new law will help increase access to higher education at the county level.

Dr Koech says the new law not only seeks to increase the number of universities in the country but also outlines measures that will lead to improvement of the quality of education offered by the institutions.

"The new law will see all counties have colleges to enable the inhabitants to access education in their locality," Koech adds.

He is optimistic that the new law will help revolutionize higher learning education sector and improve education standards in the country.

The new law provides guidelines for establishment, accreditation and governance of public and private universities, proposes creations of Commissions for University Education as a successor to the current Commission for Higher Education.

Koech calls on the universities and colleges to maintain higher standards in their programmes and produce graduands who can compete globally.

"Our universities should uphold quality in their programmes and I would like to encourage universities to offer skills that are of international standards," he advises.

He notes that the new law creates room for the channeling of more funds towards research and innovation saying it suggests the two percent of the revenue be invested in research.

It also establishes the Universities Fund and spells out the procedure for admitting Government sponsored students to public uni-

versities and colleges.

The Commission for University Education has been entrusted with the mandate to promote the objectives of the university education, advice the cabinet secretary on university education policy issues, promote and assure quality of university education.

In addition the commission will monitor and evaluate the state of university education systems in relation to the national development goals.

The commission has also been vested with powers to license any student recruitment agency and activities of foreign institutions.

Meanwhile, teachers have been blamed for poor performance registered in public primary schools in national examinations.

A report compiled by the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) cites high rates of absenteeism among teachers among factors that have contributed to poor performance in public primary

schools.

Parents who took part in the study accused teachers of boycotting lessons, a vice which left students ill prepared for national exams.

According to the School Report Card, a report that captures parent's views of how well their children's schools are performing, 45 percent of teachers do not appear in class to teach.

"The data indicates that the teachers may be in school but still do not appear in class to teach," the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) School Report Card project officer Wolde Wesa said.

The report further points to fears of insecurity in schools among parents where children, especially girls fall victim to sexual harassment.

"The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and other arms of the Government should protect children," Wesa said.

He said some of those entrusted

to mentor, protect, teach the children turn against them by abusing them sexually.

The report also noted that some regions like Wajir have primary schools without classrooms or proper sanitation.

The scorecard, he said will provide parents with an instrument to help them get more involved in the management of their children's education.

The school report card, he added will also be a forum for parents to give feedback to agencies responsible for the administration of education.

Mr Peter Kubeba, the NTA chairman said there was a poor link between parents and school management. This, he said has reduced the capacity to provide quality education.

The Report Card was officially launched by George Opiyo of the Quality Assurance and Standards Department in the Ministry of Education.



# Government urged to equip rural schools with facilities

By **BEKADZO TONDO**

THE Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) has challenged the government to improve the deplorable state of infrastructure in most public schools in marginalized parts of the country.

The Kilifi KNUT branch chairman, Mr Humphrey Safari, lamented that the government has failed in its obligation to ensure that public schools in the rural parts of the country are equipped with essential facilities such as enough classrooms, staff houses, desks and other requirements.

Mr Safari noted that many public primary schools located in the rural parts of Kilifi County have been performing poorly in national exams as they lacked the necessary facilities.

He singled out KwaDadu primary school in Vitengeni division which has been operating without toilets since the school was started seven years ago.

He made the remarks when the school received a boost towards the construction of an early childhood classroom, toilets and rain water harvesting tank and a greenhouse for farming project.

The projects are jointly funded by the Safaricom foundation, Coca Cola Company, Tinga Tanga Tales foundation and the Kenya Literature Bureau at cost of Ksh 3.3 million

Mr Safari who was accompanied by the union official in charge of Vitengeni zone Mr Mwaboza Katungo noted with great concern that the school only has three teachers employed by the government who are expected to serve a student population of 240 pupils.

"KwaDadu primary school located in the remote parts of Kilifi count has been operating with only two teachers. It is unfortunate that students in this school are expected to compete equally with other well equipped schools in national examinations," said Mr Safari.

Mr Safari said the school does not have a single permanent classroom and that children were learning in makeshift structures while in some instances learning takes place under

trees.

The Knut official said that most teachers posted to the school seek transfers as they are unable to cope with the harsh living conditions.

The school head teacher Mr. Thomas Mwaringa said the school lacks better housing structures and poor communication network both by road and mobile telephone network coverage.

"As teachers in this school we are really experiencing many challenges as we lack proper housing structures and the communication network is also bad," said Mr Mwaringa.

Mr Mwaringa said the enrolment of the pupils to the school has been low as most girls drop out due to lack of proper sanitation facilities.

He further said the pupils risk being bitten by snakes as they have to go to the bushes to respond to the call of nature.

"Proper sanitation facilities like toilets is very essential for any learning institution and since my school

lacks such facilities most the girls end up abandoning school," said Mwaringa.

The head teacher appealed to charitable organizations to assist the school to construct better classrooms, buy desks for the children and build better housing units for the teachers.

Meanwhile, residents of Chonyi in Kilifi have benefited from a maternity wing project built at a cost of Ksh 9 million by the Japanese government.

The maternity wing and staff quarter built at St. Teresa Catholic church in Chonyi will ensure that expectant mothers access care without having to travel for long distances.

According to the sister in charge of St Teresa Mission hospital, Mary Njunguna, the project that was completed last year will ensure that pregnant women access professional care.

The Japanese Deputy Ambassador to Kenya Mr. Yoichiro Yamada who officially handed over of the project to the hospital management team said

the project was supported with financial grants disbursed under the Japanese government Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP).

Kilifi District Public Health Officer Mr Vincent Iduri thanked the Japanese government for the timely donation.

Mr Iduri said maternal deaths in the area remain high as expectant mothers have been unable to access proper maternal services.

He said most expectant mothers die out of complications arising at child birth as majority deliver at homes with the help of traditional birth attendants who lack skills.

"Kilifi district has been losing many expectant mothers each year due to lack of maternal services within their reach. Most of them rely on the traditional birth attendants who lack the professional skills," said Mr Iduri.

He said with the construction of the health center at St. Teresa Catho-

lic Church hospital in Chonyi, most expectant mothers will now be able to get proper maternal services.

"The maternity project will reduce the number of deaths arising from complications at child birth," said Mr Iduri.

Sister Mary urged expectant women in the area to make use of the facility to reduce the high rates of both maternal and child mortality in Chonyi division.

## Illegal firearms pose threat to peace

By **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

THE proliferation of firearms in some regions is beginning to raise concern.

There are several areas across the country where illegal possession of firearms is rife and thus a cause for worry among communities and politicians.

Leaders from the affected areas now want the Government to embark on a disarmament exercise with a view to ensuring that the firearms in illegal hands are surrendered to the authorities concerned.

Former Kwanza MP Dr. Noah Wekesa has called for the immediate disarmament of the communities in possession of illegal firearms across the country.

Wekesa, whose constituency is prone to insecurity, says that the disarmament of the communities perceived to possess the illegal weapons will help beef up security ahead of the polls.

He expressed concern over the rising number of firearms in illegal hands saying the general election may be in jeopardy if the situation is not arrested.

For the country to be totally freed from militia groups, Wekesa said that the disarmament exercise should not be confined to Samburu and Tana Delta but should be extended to other areas suspected to be in danger as a result of the illegal firearms. Unlike other political leaders who vehemently resist deployment of military operation in their areas, Wekesa welcomed the operation in his area.

The cabinet minister said that he was ready to welcome military operation in his area so long as the exercise is done in a humane manner.

"I will have no problem with the exercise if the military personnel can embrace and value human rights principles," he added.

Wekesa pointed out that leaders do not like military operation in their areas because of the inhuman approach the security officers employ while on such important mission. The immediate former Forest minister at the same time cautioned political leaders in the country against issuing inflammatory statements.

He urged political leaders to avoid incitement their supporters because what they say may build or disturb peace.



**Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) officials led by National Chairman Wilson Sossion (center) sing after addressing the press last year.** Photo/File

# Saccos urged to diversify their products

By **BOB OMBATI**

WOMEN and youth have been challenged to join Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies (Saccos) in large numbers and seek elective posts to help participate in decision making forums.

Co-operative Development and Marketing Permanent Secretary, Seno Nyakenyanya says the societies play a great role in reducing poverty, creating jobs and social integration.

Nyakenyanya, who spoke during the official launch of Kisii branch Mwalimu Sacco, said the societies created room to enhance savings that can help boost the country's social and economic development.

He urged the Saccos to mobilize resources and diversify their activities and products to enable members access loans and mortgages.

The government observed the PS had put in place both legal and institutional framework to promote good governance, leadership and professionalism in cooperative societies and

help hasten the attainment of vision 2030.

Saccos, noted the PS played a crucial role in providing sustainable and diversified avenues for mobilization of resources, adding that they acted as intermediaries between savings and investments.

"Saccos have been exploring and seeking ways of diversifying their financial products and services by offering affordable mortgages, micro-finance business and should review their approaches through business process re-engineering and innovativeness," Nyakenyanya said.

The PS noted that the Sacco movement in the country had mobilized immense savings, stressing that it had more potential to increase the savings envisaged in vision 2030.

He asserted that under the economic pillar, the societies played a strategic role of creating a vibrant and globally competitive financial sector and enhanced high levels of savings aimed at mobilizing financial resources for the country's investment needs.

The PS who was accompanied by the Chairman of Mwalimu National Sacco Shem Motuka, the Sacco's Chief Executive Officer Joshua Ojall, Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Co-operatives (KUSCCO) representative Evlyne Chepchirchir, supervisory committee members and delegates commended the Society for opening the Kisii branch saying it was a way of increasing public awareness on co-operatives.

Saccos, noted Nyakenyanya contributed to social economic development, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and promoted global network of co-operatives and their efforts in building community, democracy and peace.

The PS challenged the society's leaders to embrace prudent business and commercial practices to reflect team work and members aspirants towards the Sacco's growth and development.

He noted the success of the Sacco relied on its leaders and loyalty by members and lauded Mwalimu na-

tional Sacco officials and members for collaborating to realize positive development.

"Good leadership has helped to foster confidence and trust in the cooperative societies, leading to an increase in membership from 8 to 10 million in a short period," noted Nyakenyanya.

Ojall noted the Sacco had opened branches in Kisumu, Webuye, Kisii, Mombasa, Kitui, Upper Hill (Nairobi) Meru, Nakuru and Eldoret owing to increasing demand of services and products by members.

Motuka noted the Sacco was expanding rapidly and would venture into insurance industry and offer mortgages to her members affordably, saying the members were suffering seeking the service in commercial banks which charged high interest rates.

He urged members to save and invest in the Sacco, noting that unlike commercial banks, they were assured of dividends annually to boost their morale.



# The Link

Enhancing governance for all

## Which way for CDF!

**T**HE Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was passed into law in December 2003 with the aim of devolving some funds to the grassroots so that people at the grassroots level would have a say in development.

The CDF Act, 2003 provided that the government sets aside at least 2.5 percent of its ordinary revenue for disbursement under the CDF program. Three quarters of the amount has always been divided equitably between Kenya's 210 constituencies while the remaining quarter has been disbursed based on poverty index to cater for poor constituencies.

Since its inception in 2003, CDF has facilitated a transfer of over Kshs 70.956 billion from the central government to 210 different constituencies. These funds are earmarked to finance the implementation of public projects that have contributed towards the overall socio-economic development of Kenya as a country.

However, in the past CDF has continued to operate in very contentious and unconstitutional circumstances. Parliamentarians have chosen to ignore these facts simply because the status quo benefits them. Misappropriation of CDF cash is well documented and the misuse of taxpayers money at the grassroots is getting worse even as Kenyans adopts a devolved system of governance.

In line with the new constitution, the Ministry of Finance took a clear stance on the CDF in the Budget Policy Statement (BPS) 2012/2013. The Budget policy statement proposes that the CDF be incorporated into the revenue of the County governments as an additional grant on top of the allocation to be determined by the CRA formula.

The BPS correctly recognizes that CDF as was structured has no constitutional basis.

Article 1 (4) of the new constitution clearly indicates that the sovereign power of the people is exercised at the national level and the county level. The Ministry of Finance is therefore correct in proposing a grant to County governments in which Members of the National Assembly will have limited role unlike before. Article 175 (a) further emphasizes the need for separation of powers and renders the present CDF arrangement as unconstitutional.

Several recommendations had been proposed to amend the CDF Act (amended) 2007 to be in line with the new constitution. Some of the proposals of the task force reviewing the CDF Act (amended) 2007 were adopted by the tenth parliament and incorporated in the CDF Act, 2012.

In January this year, Parliament passed the CDF Act, 2012 and the President assented to it meaning that in principal, CDF remains.



### COMMENTARY

## Government intensifies plans to resettle IDPs

### COMMENT

By HENRY OWINO

**A**TOTAL number of 8,335 of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have been resettled out of the targeted population of 9,571 households. This therefore leaves a balance of 1,236 households still living in the Camps.

The Government has already acquired 4,986.6 acres of land which will resettle all the remaining IDPs in the camps. In the farms where the IDPs have been resettled, the Government has provided basic social amenities such as schools, water, electricity and health facilities.

The Government has utilized a loan of Ksh 1.5 billion from the African Development Bank (ADB), to construct houses and provide farm inputs to all the targeted 1,900 households. These houses have been constructed on the IDPs own land.

Another Ksh 300 million is being used to construct houses and provide farm inputs for an additional 2000 households. The project has also undertaken peace and reconciliation initiatives in the project area.

The remarks were made by the Government spokesman, Muthui Kariuki during press briefing in Nairobi.

Muthui stated that out of the 640 households who fled to Uganda at the height of post election violence of 2007, 397 households have returned home leaving a balance of 243 households still in Uganda.

The group received a total of Ksh 13,895 which includes ex-gratia support of Ksh 10,000 and 25,000 for burnt or destroyed houses respectively. He said the government has continued to appeal to the remaining 243 households to return home now that peace has prevailed.

He said the violence resulted into displacement of 663,921 people, out of which 350,000 sought refuge in 118 camps. While 313,921 people were integrated in communities countrywide, 640 households took refuge in Uganda. The violence further resulted in the loss of 1,300 lives while 78,254 houses were destroyed.

The Kenya Government through the Operation Rudi Nyumban managed to persuade 350,000 individuals to return to their farms with the incentive to provide them with security. Every heads of households of the affected families were paid Ksh 10,000 to meet basic household needs.

Muthui explained the families were

also paid Ksh 25,000 to construct basic housing for those whose houses were burnt or destroyed. Majority of IDPs who had land have since returned to their homes. Every households that were affected per province got compensation. The total amount the Government has paid to date is Ksh 2,646,000 directly to the affected IDPs.

Under this programme, 30,953 houses were constructed by individuals in Kipkelion and Trans-Nzoia area who were paid Ksh 25,000 per household for construction of destroyed or burnt houses.

In the government purchased land, some 6,978 families have been assisted and benefited with Ksh 10,000, and Ksh 25,000. Some formed Self Help Groups and bought land measuring 342.5 acres.

"These are the ones the government decided to buy for ¼ acres each to avoid overcrowding and creating slums in areas they bought land," Government spokesman explained.

He said the Government purchased land in Rift Valley and Central Provinces where they been resettled. "To date 5,742 households have been settled on Government purchased land measuring 16,000.13 acres.

He stated that another group of 2,593 in Turkana IDPs have been resettled on 1,404 acres donated by the County Council of Turkana and Municipal Council of Lodwar. Currently the Government is constructing houses for them at an estimated cost of Ksh 1billion.

Up to date the Government of Kenya in conjunction with other partners has helped to reconstruct 167 public schools that were destroyed during the Post Election Violence at a cost of Ksh 411,400,000.

The government under a UNDP grant of Ksh 132 million has supported IDPs by developing four business solution centers in Kisumu, Kitale, Eldoret and Nakuru to provide entrepreneurial skills to women and the youth.

"To date 1,459 Post Election Violence (PEV) victims have benefited from the training. Through the same programme, 350 fishermen have been provided with fishing gear and fishing nets in Kisumu while 1,600 households

have been provided with farm inputs," Muthui stated. In addition, 50 cows have been distributed to post election victims in Kisumu, Kitale, Eldoret and Nakuru.

In the 2011/2012 financial year, Muthui disclosed that the government has spent Ksh 35million to promote Inter-Communal Peace Initiative in areas characterized by inter-communal conflict. The funds have been disbursed to Provincial Administration to execute this mandate.

The government has been providing humanitarian support in form of food and non-food items to the victims. The non-food items include tarpaulins for shelter, blankets water jerricans, soap and mosquito nets. The non-food items purchased and distributed are valued at Ksh 74.7million from July 2011 to date. Similarly food worth Ksh 417million has been purchased and distributed to all the IDPs within the same period.

The government has continued to provide budgetary resources for IDPs resettlement programme. To date the government through the Ministry of State in charge of Special Programmes has spent over 3billion to finance various IDP resettlement activities leaving a balance of Ksh 1billion.

In order to respond to the challenges of purchasing adequate land for resettlement for the PEV victims and forest evictees, the government adopted an alternative procurement land procedure where the individual IDPs/Forest Evictees have been encouraged to identify land parcels/urban plots in areas of their choice.

The government carries out feasibility studies and pays directly to the land/plot owner and allocates the land to the beneficiaries. However the value of land or plot should not exceed Ksh 450,000 in each case.

The spokesman asked the media to verify their news sources before airing or publishing them to the public. He said it is not only misleading but also immoral for anybody to manufacture and peddle the lies of the nature that the so called Human Rights Watch is peddling through the internet and local media.

"I would like to appeal to the media to weigh very carefully whatever information the NGOs and foreign groups are passing to them purporting to be news. It is these groups and their kind who partly contributed to the mayhem that this country went through in 2007/08," Muthui cautioned.



The Link is published monthly by the Institute for Civic Affairs and Development (ICAD)

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Enhancing governance for all

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This Newspaper appreciates the facilitation accorded by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in Kenya

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## By LINK CORRESPONDENT

RESIDENTS of Bondora in Kaloleni District of Kilifi County have threatened to destabilise operations at the Athi River mining company if the management fails to address pollution. The residents said their numerous pleas to the company which also processes cement and lime products to control dust emissions have not born any fruit.

Recently, the residents staged a peaceful demonstration and protested against the dust emissions which had exposed them to health risks. The residents led by Mr Emmanuel Chengo demanded that the company lawyers M/S Mohamed/Muigia convene an urgent meeting and resolve the stalemate. "As residents of Bondora who have been adversely affected by the dust emissions, we have resolved to seek redress with the company lawyers to help find a lasting solution to the problem," said Mr Chengo.

Speaking to TheLink after the demonstration Mr Chengo said people in the area have incurred huge losses owing to the dust being emitted from the cement. He said their coconut trees have dried up as effects of the dust take a high toll on them. "Most of us have developed chest complications after inhaling the fine dust," said Mr Chengo.

An officer at the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) at Kilifi confirmed that they had undertaken an environmental impact assessment and established that the dust emission proof gadgets fitted at the factory were defective.

The official who declined to be mentioned said they had compiled their report and wanted the company to correct the anomaly or completely shut down the factory.

He said they had submitted the report to the director of Compliance and Enforcement Mr Benjamin Langwan who is set to give direction on the matter. The residents however accused politicians in the area of failing to act despite their incessant pleas against the company.

Mr Chengo said Article 4 of the Constitution guarantees them the right to clean environment and thus they will not rest until the problem solved.

Meanwhile, parents and pupils at Kwadadu Primary School in Vitenjeni Division of Kilifi County are all smiles after the school received a major financial boost from well wishers.

The school is among 27 primary schools from marginalized areas

# Athi River mining company on the spot over pollution

earmarked to benefit from a Ksh 43 million donation from the Safaricom Foundation, TingaTinga Tales Foundation, Coca Cola Company and Kenya Literature Bureau to improve physical infrastructure.

The Trustee of Safaricom Foundation Ms Josephine Kamanthe said the project dubbed 'Know and Grow' targets disadvantaged schools in Kilifi, Kitui South, Kitui Central, Rarieda, Rangwe, Bobcari, Wajir North, Ikolomani and Kinango districts.

The school received Ksh 3.3 million under the project which was channelled towards the construction of an early childhood classroom and four pit latrines. In addition, the school received a water harvesting tank and a greenhouse farming project.

The Kwadadu Primary School which has a population of 240 pupils, was started seven years ago but lacks basic facilities including classrooms and pit latrines.

Pupils in the school learn in makeshift structures and learning is suspended during rainy seasons. Pupils have resorted to using bushes to an-

swer the call of nature.

The school which requires at least seven teachers is currently operating with three TSC teachers who include the head teacher, his deputy and one teacher. Communication network remains poor and the road leading to the school is impassable.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) now wants the government and other well wishers to help refurbish the school to create a conducive environment for learning.

Led by the chairman for Kilifi branch Mr Humphrey Safari, the union says that most teachers posted at the school seek transfers as there are no houses to accommodate them.

"Many teachers have declined their appointments as the school is tucked away in the interior and there are no rental houses to accommodate teachers," said Mr Safari

The school head teacher Mr Thomas Mwangi points out the school lacks proper sanitation facilities adding that the pupils learn in makeshift structures.

The director of public affairs

and communication in Coca Cola in charge of Central, East and West Africa Business Unit Ms Norah Odweso noted that many schools in rural parts of the country have been neglected.

Ms Odweso said that the government has failed to equip learning institutions in the rural areas and children learn in deplorable conditions.

"It is a pity to find a school like KwaDadu in pathetic state when it is located about 120 Kilometers away from Mombasa City," said MS Odweso.

The director said though the government introduced the Free Primary Education Program in 2003, most pupils in remote parts the country have no access to education. Ms Kamanthe noted that education levels in the semi-arid parts of Kilifi County are still very low adding that retrogressive cultures have been a major barrier

She said statistics of the 2009 national census showed that only 10 percent out of the over 1.1 people in Kilifi county had attained secondary education with about 3 percent of the population achieving tertiary education.



Athi River Mining plant in Mombasa.

# Kenya tipped to industrialize by 2030

## By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE government through the Ministry of State, Planning, National Development and Vision 2030 is in the process of finalizing the County Development profiles that will provide baseline information on the devolved units.

Planning PS Eng. David Stowa said the overarching objective of vision 2030 is to transform Kenya into "a middle-income rapidly industrializing country offering all its citizens a high quality of life in a cleaner environment" by the year 2030.

"The vision gives priority to

enabling sectors such as infrastructure, quality public service, security, science and technology, land reforms and energy as well as macro-economic stability," said the PS, adding that for the first time in the history of this nation, the government intends to consult Kenyans on the best ways to mitigate the effects of climate change through planning.

The minister said the first Medium Term Plan under Vision 2030 has had a major impact in the lives of Kenyans through the provision of good roads, electricity, education, health, water and irrigation, youth and women's programmes among

others.

"We cannot afford to lose that momentum. It is therefore appropriate that as a nation we begin thinking and planning for the five-year period from 2013, with Vision 2030 in mind," said the PS.

He said the Constitution of Kenya has created a two-tier structure of government at national and county level and specified the distribution of functions between the two levels of government.

"Every county will have its own strategic plan, therefore there must be some synergy between counties and between county governments and the na-

tional government," he said.

He added that the constitution further requires engagement of the public in policy formulation, in order to promote participation of the people, good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability and sustainable development which he noted are some of the key national values to be achieved.

The minister assured all the stakeholders in all the counties that their input to the second Medium Term Plan will be taken into consideration and will form part of the medium term targets that the national government will aim to achieve during the period between 2013 and 2018.



# Sirisia residents welcome new constituency

By **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

PROFESSIONALS from Sirisia constituency in Bungoma County have welcomed the split of the constituency which paved way for an additional Kabuchai constituency.

Led by a lecturer at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) Mr Bramuel Kundu, the professionals say the split has come at an opportune time when the country is bracing itself for a devolved system of governance.

The professionals note that the area has continued to lag behind in development and thus the additional constituency will help accelerate development in the area.

Kundu claims that for many years Sirisia constituency was represented in parliament by people from Kabuchai area due to its numerical strength.

This, he says, has greatly contributed to the underdevelopment of the

Western region which is now Sirisia constituency.

He accuses successive MPs of perfecting the art of exclusion when it came to the distribution of public resources in the constituency formerly called Bungoma Central and then Sirisia.

Kundu laments that due to irresponsible political leadership in the past, the western part thus now Sirisia constituency lacks adequate health and education institutions.

Kundu claims that the area has only seven secondary schools which he adds that are old fashioned.

"There are only seven secondary schools whose buildings need to be refurbished since they are in a pathetic state," he says.

Kundu at the same time discloses that the constituency has no colleges save for Lwandanyi youth polytechnic which he points out cannot cater for hundreds of pupils who complete

primary and secondary level of education and thus majority have been unable to pursue higher education.

The constituency Kundu says needs an MP who can prioritize middle level colleges and lobby public universities to establish branches in the area.

Consequently the university lecturer appeals to area residents to elect a focused person who can articulate and pursue their interests as first MP from the area.

"The area needs a leader who can advocate for more schools and colleges so that many people can access education," he says.

Sirisia constituency is one of the three constituencies that were split into two in Bungoma County by the defunct Andrew Ligale Interim Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IIEBC).

The other two constituencies in Bungoma County that were split are

Kimilili constituency which gave birth to Tongaren constituency and Webuye constituency which gave birth to Webuye East and Webuye West constituencies.

Prior to the split Sirisia constituency had a population of 243,535 people with a surface area of 445.5 square kilometers.

The constituency (Sirisia) has now a population of 102,422 people and a surface area of 213.20 square kilometers.

Kabuchai constituency which was hived off from Sirisia constituency has a population of 141,113 people with a surface area of 232.20 square kilometers.

Sirisia constituency has three electoral wards namely Namwela, Malakisi/south Kulisiru and Lwandanyi while Kabuchai constituency has four electoral wards namely Kabuchai/Chwele, West Nalondo, Bwake/Luuya and Mukuyuni.

## Primary school in Kilifi receives financial boost

By **BEKADZO TONDO**

PARENTS and pupils at Kwadadu Primary School in Vitengeni Division of Kilifi County are all smiles after the school received a major financial boost from well wishers.

The school is among 27 primary schools from marginalized areas earmarked to benefit from a Ksh 43 million donation from the Safaricom Foundation, TingaTinga Tales Foundation, Coca Cola Company and Kenya Literature Bureau to improve physical infrastructure.

The Trustee of Safaricom Foundation Ms Josephine Kamanthe said the project dubbed 'Know and Grow' targets disadvantaged schools in Kilifi, Kitui South, Kitui Central, Rarieda, Rangwe, Bobcari, Wajir North, Ikolomani and Kinango districts.

The school received Ksh 3.3 million under the project which was channelled towards the construction of an early childhood classroom and four pit latrines. In addition, the school received a water harvesting tank and a greenhouse farming project. The Kwadadu Primary School which has a population of 240 pupils, was started seven years ago but lacks basic facilities including classrooms and pit latrines.

Pupils in the school learn in makeshift structures and learning is suspended during rainy seasons. Pupils have resorted to using bushes to answer the call of nature.

The school which requires at least seven teachers is currently operating with three TSC teachers who include the head teacher, his deputy and one teacher. Communication network remains poor and the road leading to the school is impassable.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) now wants the government and other well wishers to help refurbish the school to create a conducive environment for learning. Led by the chairman for Kilifi branch Mr Humphrey Safari, the union says that most teachers posted at the school seek transfers as there are no houses to accommodate them. "Many teachers have declined their appointments as the school is tucked away in the interior and there are no rental houses to accommodate teachers," said Mr Safari.

The school head teacher Mr Thomas Mwaringa points out the school lacks proper sanitation facilities adding that the pupils learn in makeshift structures.

The director of public affairs and communication in Coca Cola in charge of Central, East and West Africa Business Unit Ms Norah Odweso noted that many schools in rural parts of the country have been neglected. Ms Odweso said that the government has failed to equip learning institutions in the rural areas and children learn in deplorable conditions. "It is a pity to find a school like KwaDadu in pathetic state when it is located about 120 Kilometers away from Mombasa City," said Ms Odweso.

The director said though the government introduced the Free Primary Education Program in 2003, most pupils in remote parts the country have no access to education.

Ms Kamanthe noted that education levels in the semi-arid parts of Kilifi County are still very low adding that retrogressive cultures have been a major barrier.

# Tana leaders blame deadly clashes on politicians

By **LINK CORRESPONDENT**

LEADERS in Garsen area of Tana River County have blamed the recent spate of killings of people in the area to politics.

The leaders led by the chairman of Tana River County Council Mr Salim Golo wondered how raiders invaded the Kipau village moments after the government had mediated peace talks among the warring communities.

"Kipau village is one of the largest villages in Garsen Constituency and it has over 100 households and thus it could be targeted politically," said Mr Golo.

Statistics from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) indicate that Garsen constituency registered 28,714 voters which translated to 66 percent of the targeted voters. Kipau village accounts for 15,500 which is the highest in the constituency.

Galole which registered 19,374 voters accounts for 61 percent of the targeted voters while Bura recorded 24,949 forming 74 percentage of the targeted voters.

According to the coordinator of IEBC North coast region Ms Anastacia Mutua, most residents of Kilenegwani and Kipini had lost identity cards during the clashes that hit the area between August and September and thus did not register as voters.

Ms Mutua said most of the residents at Kilelengwani and Ozi had their IDs burnt while others lost vital documents while fleeing the area.

The coordinator said others got displaced in the clashes something which automatically denied them the opportunity to register as voters.

Residents of Kilelengwani and parts of Kipini and Ozi lost their IDs in the clashes and thus were unable to register as voters.

Meanwhile, the business community in the region has complained of low business due to the rising cases of insecurity.

The traders said since March



One of the destroyed houses in Tana River clashes.

last year, security has deteriorated to alarming levels and about 150 people killed.

Led by Mr. Gilo Shungi, who is a businessman in Oda village, majority have been forced to close down their businesses for fear of attacks by criminal gangs.

"Business people in Tana delta district have really incurred huge losses since the beginning of this year due to lack of insecurity," said Mr Shungi.

The traders who were speaking to The Link at Tarasa trading center complained that the tribal clashes pitting the Orma and Pokomos had worsened the declining standards of security in the area.

"Since March when clashes started between the Ormas and the Pokomos, our business has really been affected forcing majority of us to shut down," said Mr Shungi.

The traders further said that the local people had fled the area in large numbers and this has denied them customers.

A spot check at Tarasa, Ngao and Oda trading centers in Garsen had established that majority of the people had fled with their belongings.

Mary Okwiri who was among the people fleeing said she was forced to abandon her home at Tarasa to join her husband at Mpeketoni.

"I decided to move with my three children to Mpeketoni after the area became hard hit by clashes.

Grace Guyo said she was moving from Oda to join her relatives in Malindi for fear of being attacked.

However Tana River county commissioner Mr. Joseph Rotich moved to allay their fears saying that the government had deployed enough security officers in the area.

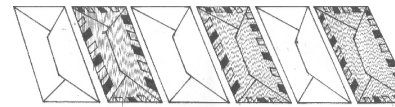
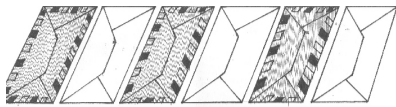
Mr Rotich confirmed that there had been mass exodus of people mostly from Kipao, Ngoa, Oda, Tarasa and other villages in Garsen but said the residents were just doing so out of panic and fear.

"The government has deployed enough security officers who have established camps at different joints while others are on patrol and thus there is no need to panic" said Mr Rotich.

The commissioner said they have been meeting as security agencies in the area to hold peace meetings with the people so that people could coexist harmoniously.

"The most important thing at the moment is to build peace among the Orma, Wardei and the Pokomos so that they can live in harmony as that was the only solution to address the crisis facing the county," said Rotich.





### Condom advert overvalued disloyalty

I HAVE read many articles supporting the withdrawn condom advertisement. They argue that disloyalty is rampant and if the advert is withdrawn, HIV/Aids would spread uncontrollably among couples. But withdrawing the offensive advert does not mean condoms are banned and those who use them know exactly where to get them. How would me praising the advert feel if they found a condom in their wife's handbags?

Though Kenyans seem to have forgotten that HIV exists, the National Aids Control Council (NACC) should not appear to promote infidelity by wives disguised as anti-Aids drive. NACC should only create awareness and leave people to decide how to act and should not force condoms down our throats.

Families are the building blocks of the society. Without strong family units, society is doomed. Thus anything that would be in conflict with family values should be avoided, more so which would appear to encourage infidelity by wives.

**Concerned Kenyan, Nairobi.**

### New government must do away with hunger

FOOD insecurity has been a major problem in Kenya, where majority of people live below poverty line. There is no gainsaying that many Kenyans cannot afford a square meal every day.

Food insecurity is contributed by various factors including drought and corruption. Many people who live in arid and semi-arid areas encounter drought frequently. It is evident that if food insecurity is dealt with, the country will move forward. The first thing that people usually think about is food. Without adequate food people can't do much.

We can only hope that the incoming government will tackle with seriousness the problem of food insecurity. It is sad that some Kenyans still sleep on empty stomachs in this day and age.

Agriculture should be boosted in all possible ways. The government, through the Ministry of Agriculture should work hard to ensure that every part of this country is green with food crops. We don't want to hear cases of deaths from hunger again.

**Concerned Kenyan, Nairobi.**

# New Parliament Speaker should fit Marende shoes

FOR the last five years, Kenya has had lively and enjoyable parliamentary sessions. This is not to imply that there were no dark moments. Increasing of salaries by MPs and irregular amendments to the constitution to safety cushion them, were not among the great moments.

Nevertheless, led by Kenneth Marende, who was sworn in as the Speaker in January 2008 in the heat of the post-election violence, the 10th Parliament has recorded its own history.

Marende, who holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Nairobi, is hailed for injecting sobriety into parliamentary debates. It should be remembered that he won the seat amid a tough contest from his rival Francis Ole Kaparo who was then fronted by PNU.

But despite having won courtesy of majority support from ODM-allied members of Parliament, Marende was never biased in his rulings, and Justin Muturi, the new Speaker, should learn from his conduct of motions and rulings.

One outstanding and most praised ruling by Marende was during the dispute between ODM and PNU in reference to the list of nominees to key constitutional offices; Chief Justice, Attorney General, Director of Public Prosecutions and Director of Budget.

The contest and conflict was about the constitutionally or otherwise of Kibaki's appointment of persons to these offices. It will be remembered that it was at this point that Marende led the legislative arm of the Government to the right path of upholding the law as the Constitution provided.

According to the provisions of the repealed Constitution, it was the



Mr. Marende, former National Assembly Speaker

duty of the executive alone to appoint persons to these offices. But the Constitution of Kenya (2010) gave the legislature an important role of approving or disapproving appointments made by the President.

Marende's ruling on Thursday, February 18, 2011 had been anxiously awaited by MPs. Challenging PNU's argument that it was only the courts that could interpret the constitution. Marende said that he had the jurisdiction to interpret specific constitutional issues to ensure Parliament business was not paralysed.

He neither nullified nor upheld the appointments. Instead he referred the matter to a parliamentary committee and consequently threw the challenge back to Kibaki and Raila

to solve it amicably. This appeared to be the best decision by the Speaker, as it was evident that no side of the coalition was favoured.

This is precisely what our new must emulate. In situations where there seems to be a conflict of laws, it is my opinion that Marende's past record must be referred to. In situations where the MPs appear to be irrational and self-centered in making and unmaking the laws, the rules of natural justice, fairness, sobriety and open-mindedness must be applied.

Kenyans are looking forward to a National Assembly and Senate where the Speaker shall be neutral and fair in all matters.

**Concerned Kenyan, Via e-mail**



### Level of police training is really deficient, uncertain

RECENT events cast doubt on the quality and efficacy of training of police officers.

I highly doubt whether the police are well prepared to protect the lives of civilians, leave easy prey to criminals?

Cases of thugs ambushing armed police and escaping with their loaded guns are on the rise.

Not long ago in Trans-Nzoia County, two policemen that had gone to lay an ambush on a wanted criminal were outsmarted by the very criminal and killed.

It defeats logic how a thug, tear gassed and surrounded in his den at 3 am, can kill all but one cop.

This comes after dozens of recruits got themselves in a trap laid by a battalion of ethnic militia in the Baragoi massacre and got killed.

I have always imagined that a loaded gun is supposed to be handled in a given way so that in the event that the trigger goes off accidentally bystanders are not hurt.

It was thus shocking during the recently concluded elections when a police officer 'accidentally' shot and killed a presiding officer. Were they under attack or was the officer dozing with his blazing gun pointed at the chest of the presiding officer?

These days, it is not uncommon to see police on patrol take turns to enter wines and spirits dens not to quench their thirst or to look for criminals but to collect the daily protection fee! With the protection fee having been pocketed, the men in uniform gleefully look the other way as 'Mututho' laws are broken with reckless abandon.

Traffic police are even worse. Images of a traffic officer being beaten by a driver some time back clearly shows that these officers lack sufficient training and regular practice in physical engagement and are easy prey to touts and drivers and other members of the public,

And the police do not help amend all this negativity, what with a majority of them still taking bribes.

We hope that the on-going police reforms will also include reviewing the training curriculum. Police are society's watchmen and need to be at their best.

**Concerned Kenyan, Via e-mail**



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

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## UNIDO establishes food-processing plants in Western Kenya

By TITUS MAERO

THE Japanese Government and the United Nations Industrial Organization (UNIDO) have established three small scale industries in Western Kenya to process different food products using soya beans.

The UNIDO projects coordinator Dr Josephine Ongoma has said the industries are aimed at encouraging Kenyan Entrepreneurs to buy similar machines and venture into processing soya bean products.

Ongoma, pointed out that the three industries based in Kisumu, Migori and Malakisi require thousands of tonnes of soya beans to make them operate at full capacity noting that there is need for the local farmers to produce more of such produce.

Addressing Soya Beans farmers at Chakol Division in Teso District, Ongoma said each machine costs about Ksh 2 million adding that there is need to increase the acreage of Soya Beans to create wealth and employment in western Kenya.

"UNIDO is here to showcase machines that any entrepreneur can acquire and venture into processing of different products from Soya beans," she added.

The official noted that the machine in Kisumu processes milk products for the urban customers, while the Migori and Malakisi machines make soya beans flour for rural people to blend with other food stuff and to enhance the nutrition.

She said the small scale industries funded through the Ministry of Industrialization will be run by Kenya Industrial Research Development Institute (KIRDI) to assist Kenya to start rural based industries to develop the areas identified.

She further said it is possible for individual farmers and organizations to invest in the same type of machines and start to process Soya beans and put their products in the market.

"These areas have high potential for production of soya beans and therefore I appeal to farmers to plant the crop in order to sustain the machines", she said adding that those who acquire the gadgets can locate them anywhere.

John Achacha, a KIRDI official who accompanied Dr Ongoma, said the three industries are an example

of what the government intends to do to spread small scale industries in all counties to spur economic growth and create employment in rural areas.

An Agronomist from Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Kakamega Centre Mr Michael Akhwale, who represented the Centre Director Dr Francis Muyekho, said his organization in collaboration

with International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) and the Ministry of Agriculture have developed high yielding quality soya bean seeds through members of community based organizations known as OKOA to sell to farmers in Western Kenya to boost production of the crop.

Akwale said that through KARI Seed Unit, KARI Kakamega had assisted farmers to multiply clean seed varieties recommended in Western Kenya Region adding that this came up after farmers had mixed all the varieties they had received earlier.

He observed that Soya bean crop was initially started in the area to

enrich the exhausted soil and reduce striga weed but farmers continued planting of the crop without knowledge of its viability, and ended up mixing up the varieties.

"The problem caused their crop not to fetch much money as different buyers insisted on particular varieties," Akhwale said adding that after sorting out the problem, farmers have a ready market and must therefore produce enough soya beans to sustain the three industries in Western Kenya.

Akwale told farmers that western Kenya had been allocated a big portion of the soya beans to produce and supply to the industries and cautioned that unless the local farmers produced the quota they have been allocated, other farmers from Central Rift Valley and Eastern Provinces will take up their quota to supply the industries with the raw material required.

Mr Oraro at the same time said western Kenya is required to produce 3,240 tonnes, Nyanza (537) Rift Valley (133), Central (100) and Eastern

(199). A local farmer and coordinator of OKOA organization Mr Dismas Okage, who grows more than three acres of the crop, urged his counterparts to produce quality soya beans to supply the industries.

"We have been crying over lack of a market and now we have a regular buyer through UNIDOR and others, it is up to us to produce enough soya beans," he said at the occasion that was also addressed by ICTA official Mr Robert Murega, Mr John Mukalama and the Chairman of Western Grain Growers Association Mr Dobi Okalo who said farmers in Teso are expected to harvest 45 tonnes of the first quality seeds which his organization gave them to propagate and sell to other farmers in the region.

Encouraging farmers to grow the crop, Okalo said Soya beans is a highly nutritious crop grown in Western Kenya and parts of Eastern, Rift-Valley and Central provinces and named some of the varieties as Gazelle, SB 3 and SB 19.



Maasai pastoralists preparing their maize harvest in Narok, Kenya.

## Residents irked by council's move to halt funding

By BEKADZO TONDO

KILIFI residents have protested over plans by the County Council to halt the funding of 31 community projects that were initially allocated Ksh76 million through the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF).

The residents say that they were not consulted when the council changed from the agreed plan and were only notified of the new development during a meeting at the council to approve new projects that were slated for implementation.

The county clerk Mr Elijah Mungaya said the council had invited two representatives from each ward to approve projects to be funded through LATF during the 2013/2014 financial year.

However, trouble started when the officer in charge of the Council Local Authority Service Delivery Action plan (LASDAP) meeting Mr Kenneth Kazungu tabled a list of new projects that was different from what has been proposed by the residents in their respective wards.

Most representatives accused the technical committee of shortchanging the residents by approving projects that had not been proposed at the grassroots level.

Led by Mr. Edward Karisa, the ward representatives demanded to know the rationale behind the seeking of proposals at the ward level only to change projects that have been approved.

"The council staff visited us in our respective wards and requested us to submit our project proposals but we are shocked to learn that all the projects we recommended will not receive funding," said Mr. Karisa.

Efforts by Mr. Kazungu to explain why the projects had been changed fell on deaf ears.

"After we receive the project proposals from each ward, the council forwards the list to various government ministries for technical advice and thus some projects are dropped at this point," said Mr Kazungu.

Civic leaders led by Kaya Fungo ward councilor Mrira Mwafulo wanted to know why most health projects proposed at the ward level had been changed.

Mr Mwafulo said the residents proposed projects based on their priority and it was not fair for the technical team to change them without consulting the people.

"We are concerned that most of the health projects proposed by residents at the ward level have now been changed and we want to know why the residents were not consulted on the same," said Mr. Mwafulo.

However the chairman to the council Mr. Anthony Kingi denied claims that the council was forcing projects on the communities.

Mr. Kingi instead said the action by the local authority is based on the technical advice they receive from different ministries to avoid wastage of funds.

"Before the implementation of community projects the council invites heads of department from different ministries to give their technical advice to avoid doing wrong things and thus based on recommendations, the council is forced to alter initial plans," said Mr Kingi.

## Child abuse rampant in Busia County, says official

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUSIA County registered a total of 4,000 child neglect cases last year, the director of children services has said.

Addressing stakeholders at a Busia hotel recently, the Director of Children Services Ahmed Hussein attributed the rising child neglect cases in the County to poor parental skills, ignorance of the law, polygamous marriages and poverty.

He said children whose mothers are inherited widows are the hardest hit by the vice because the widows are quickly abandoned once the responsibility of raising the children becomes a reality.

"Cases of defilement are on the rise not only in Busia County, but the whole country. In Busia County 130 cases of defilement were handled out of which 112 had been finalized with the sentences being meted on the offenders ranging from life imprisonment to three years for child offenders," said the director.

The director further attributed rising child neglect cases to complacence

on the part of parents and school heads who shield the perpetrators after being bribed by the offenders, poor investigations and hence weak prosecution leading to acquittal of the culprits and lack of coordination among judicial stakeholders in the provision of efficient justice to the affected children.

"Alcohol and drug abuse have also contributed a lot to cases of child abuse including incest, defilement and neglect. The situation is grave in Teso district where alcohol brewing is a long time cultural activity and the community does not consider it a crime," said Hussein.

Hussein added the National Council for Children's Services created by the Children Act 2001 will exercise general supervision and control over planning, financing and coordination of child rights and welfare activities to ensure children are protected from abuse and neglect.

"According to the 2009 census, the population of Kenya stands at 38.8million with children translating to 20.6million which represents

53 percent whereas the population of Busia County was 0.7million out of which 0.3 million of the population were children representing 48.8percent," he said.

The National Council for Children Services chairperson Helen Waweru who also addressed the occasion said cases of sexual abuse targeting children have been on the rise in the country with a recent government and UNICEF study revealing that one in every three girls and one in every five boys aged between 18 and 24 have been sexually abused before reaching 18 years.

The council chair added that the grim picture is worsened by the fact that most of the cases are perpetrated by family members, neighbours and people in authority entrusted to care for the children such chiefs, teachers, medical staff and security personnel.

"Most cases of child abuse and neglect go unreported due to the culture of silence mainly blamed on stigma and out of court agreements and ignorance on preservation of evidence after a child is sexually abused," said

Waweru.

She added that the matter is further complicated when parents, care givers and duty bearers collude with the perpetrators by receiving payments in the form of cash, chicken and cows in order to drop the case.

Ms Waweru at the same time expressed concern saying in Kenya, it is estimated that there are 2.4million orphans of which 1million are as a result of HIV/AIDS.

"Currently about 47,500 children infected by HIV/AIDS are on Anti-Retro viral Treatment. This calls for innovative ways of assisting these vulnerable children," she said, adding that some religious sects prohibit children from accessing medical attention in health facilities due to outdated cultural beliefs.

"We are therefore appealing to the media to highlight cases of child abuse and neglect within their respective areas of jurisdiction so that the necessary action can be taken against those involved," said the chairperson adding that the media is one of the key stakeholders in child protection.



By BEKADZO TONDO

KAYA elders have formed a council to promote the protection and conservation of sacred forests in the area.

The council known as the Kilifi County Kaya Elders Council (KCK-EC) will work closely with the Ministry of Culture and National heritage to ensure the cultural values of the Mijikenda communities in Coast region are conserved.

Led by the council chairman Mr Hussein Matsila they expressed dismay over the massive destruction of sacred forests in Coast region and said they will not relent in their bid to protect them.

"We have witnessed massive destruction of the protected forest cover in coast region and the council will now try to put measures in place to conserve them," said Mr Matsila

They made the remarks at Coast Development Authority social hall in Kilifi town after attending a four days workshop for the Kaya elders coordinated by World Wide Fund for nature (WWF) in collaboration with Coast Forest Conservation Unit (CFCU).

According to Mr Elias Kimaru, the project executive officer of WWF in charge of Kwale Forest Landscape Restoration project, WWF had funded a two years program to capacity build the Kaya elders and get knowledge on how they can manage the kayas in terms of protection and conservation.

Mr Kimaru said the government through the Ministry of Culture and National heritage has not been able to effectively protect and conserve the gazetted shrines like the kaya forest due to failure to incorporate the Kaya elders.

"The WWF has however come up with a 2 years program that seeks to build the capacity of Kaya elders from Kwale, Kilifi and Lamu counties so that they can have powers to manage the gazetted forest covers mostly the kayas," said Kimaru.

The officer said apart from capacity building the kaya elders, there was

## Kaya elders roped in bid to conserve sacred forests

need to bring the elders to a group so that they can be recognized by the government and have official say in the forests management.

"As a sponsor of this project we noticed the importance of bringing the Kaya elders into a group to do some capacity building on the members to know their roles in forest protection and conservation management process so that they can directly have a hand in the entire management," said Mr Kimaru.

The council adviser Mr. Daniel Mwawara lamented that private de-

velopers had encroached into kaya forest land and destroyed the forest covers.

Mr Mwawara from Kaya MudziMuvya in Rabai gave an example of Kaya Chonyi, Kaya Kambe and Kaya bendeje in Rabai which had been encroached by residents who had cleared the indigenous trees to create room for farming and residential sites.

"We are determined to protect and conserve the forest covers mostly the kaya shrines but we cannot be effective due to the biting poverty and support from the government," said Mr

Mwawara.

Mr Mwawara said the Kaya elders should be empowered financially to play effective roles in the conservation of the forest.

He said though most Kaya elders are elderly people in the society they do not receive the Ksh.1500 monthly stipend for the elderly through the senior citizens payment program.

He said if the elders were beneficiaries of the project, then, they are better placed to manage the forests and protect them from wanton destruction.



The Kaya elders in traditional dress.

## Department hunts for parents accused of child neglect

By PETER MUTUKU

THE children department in Embu has launched a manhunt for 17 parents accused of neglecting and abandoning their children.

Embu West District Children Officer Irene Komu says that the department plans to apply for warrants of arrest against 11 women and seven men for allegedly failing to show up in her office for violating the rights of the minors.

Speaking to the media in her office, Ms Komu said the move seeks to protect the rights of children and thus individuals who infringe on the rights of children will not be tolerated.

She warned that individuals who defy summons by her office will face the law and urged them to come and provide information.

"It is unconstitutional for any parent to neglect or abandon a child on whatever circumstances, be it economic hardship or by virtue of parents separation. It is the responsibility of the parents to take care and provide for their children," said Komu.

She said the Constitution guarantees the rights of every child and all parents must abide by the law.

She spoke as Children officers assisted by local Provincial administration helped to rescue four school girls who had been married off in Makima area, Mbeere South District.

Two girls who are in Class Seven and Class Eight at Ndune Primary School were already pregnant upon their rescue.

Area Children's Officer Grace Nyawira said medical examination had established that one of the girls had been defiled while examinations on others will be conducted later.

The officer lamented that early marriages are deeply rooted in the area and are being conducted secretly. She said the department has been working closely with the teachers to sensitize the girls on pregnancy and life skills.

The area also records high rates of absenteeism and truancy as pupils provide labour in the vast green grams, maize and cotton fields.

"It is shocking that one of the girls was married off to a parent at the school, another one to a local businessman while a third one eloped with a tout. The fourth girl aged 17 is said to have been impregnated by a Class Seven school mate," said Nyawira. She said the 20 year old boy had stayed out of school for many years where he was engaged in business and only resumed last year.

A teacher who requested anonymity said though the school has 334 pupils, the number declines with time and in some years, the school can even count an average of 200 pupils.

## Kenya performs poorly on corruption index

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

KENYA still ranks high in corruption related matters both globally and in Africa.

The Transparency International (TI) global movement against corruption has ranked Kenya number 139 out of 176 countries in the global Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2012.

Based on expert opinion, countries are scored from zero to 100 on a scale where 0 means highly corrupt and 100 means least corrupt or very clean.

The CPI measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption in countries worldwide.

In the report released last December, two-thirds of the 176 countries ranked in the 2012 index scored below 50. Kenya scored 27 and thus fell way below the 50 percent mark, an indication that public institutions need to be more transparent and officials more accountable.

It is imperative to note that only five out of the 48 African countries ranked in the index scored above 50, a further indication of a serious corruption problem in the continent.

The highest scoring and thus the least corrupt country in Sub-Saharan Africa was Botswana which was ranked number 30 with a score of 65 marks.

Other African countries that scored

above 50 include Cape Verde which scored 60, Mauritius which scored 57 and Rwanda which scored 53. Among the East Africa Community countries Burundi was the most corrupt country followed very closely by Kenya.

Kenya is also among the 35 lowest scoring countries falling in the category of countries widely perceived as either endemically corrupt or failed.

Lack of progress in tackling graft is however being blamed on lack of political will and the slow pace of reforms in critical sectors despite implementation of the constitution of Kenya 2010.

TI-Kenya Executive Director Mr. Samuel Kimeu said that Kenya's poor ranking was an indication that reforms brought in by the constitution of Kenya 2010 have not yet yielded fruits in the fight against corruption.

Consequently, Kimeu urged the political and economic elite to allow enforcement institutions to do their work without interference.

"Our main problem remains lack of enforcement. There are still too many unresolved scandals. If perpetrators of corruption go unpunished, it is unlikely that Kenya will ever get corruption under control," he observed. Kimeu lauded the reforms in the Judiciary saying that they hold great promise if sustained and scaled up.

He however lamented that the delay in reforming the police force where highest incidences of bribery are encountered saying the move was greatly hampering the fight against corruption and cementing doubts on official commitment to fight corruption. "Comprehensive reforms in the public sector are also needed especially as devolution kicks in post the 2013 general elections," he added.

The CPI 2012 results demonstrate that Kenyans despite the Government's declaration of zero tolerance to corruption and implementation of the constitution of Kenya 2012, continue to pay the highest cost of the vice.

Corruption generally comprises of illegal activities which are deliberately hidden and only come to light through scandals, investigations or prosecutions.

The National Government Coordination Bill that seeks to retain chiefs and their assistants in their current roles contravenes the will of Kenyans.

When Kenyans overwhelmingly voted for the Constitution of Kenya 2010, they sealed the fate of the provincial administration in the devolved government structure. The people of Kenya particularly ordinary citizens thought time had finally come for them to do away with the administrators who were fond of abusing their power.

For many years the chiefs and their assistants had used the colonial Chief's Act to grab property and mis-handle people with impunity.

The removal or redeployment of the provincial administrators as enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 thus came as a big relief to Kenyans who had already lost confidence in the colonial oriented, dictatorial and highly corrupt administrators.

To sneak chiefs and their assistants into the supreme law without appropriate legislation geared towards reforming them is tantamount to maintaining the status quo.

Internal security minister Mr. Katoo Ole Metito should be made aware that the otherwise good name of the Government has for long been tainted by some chiefs and their assistants.

At least 90 percent of the chiefs and their assistants are corrupt and perform their duties without due regard to the law of the land and human rights.

Many chiefs and their assistants are arrogant, bossy, greedy and lack even the slightest courtesy for all those people placed below them.

Illicit brews, insecurity and poverty in communities are in most cases perpetuated by chiefs and their assistants because the administrators pursue personal selfish and greed interests at the expense of citizens' welfare.



# KWS urged to curb human wildlife conflict in Ganze

By BEKADZO TONDO

KENYA Wildlife Services has been challenged to construct water pans around the Tsavo East National Park to contain the wildebeests within their restricted zones and curb human and wildlife conflicts.

Leaders from Ganze district argued that lack of water sources within the park had forced the wildebeests mostly elephants to sneak out to search for the essential commodity.

Led by former Mitangani Ward councillor Daniel Mangi, the leaders said farmers in Ganze district which borders the Tsavo East National park have incurred huge losses owing to the destruction of their crops.

Speaking to The Link in Kilifi town, Mr Mangi said the stray elephants have destroyed their maize, cassava, bananas and pawpaw trees.

"Farmers who border the Tsavo national park have been unable to grow their crops to maturity as they are destroyed by the wildebeests that stray into their farms," said Mr Mangi.

The former Vice Chairman of Kilifi County Council Mr Teddy Mwambire further proposed that KWS puts up an electric fence around the national park as a lasting solution to the human and wildlife conflict problem.

Mr Mwambire who is also the councillor for Vitengeni ward said apart from the wildebeests destroying

farm crops they also pose danger to the human lives.

The civic leader said stray elephants last year killed a woman who was walking to fetch water and injured another.

He said the area has not been secure enough for people to go on with their daily activities including going to their farms as the animals can ambush them any time.

"I think the best solution to control human and wildlife conflicts is for KWS to erect an electric fence around the national park so that residents can continue with their lives without fear of attack by the marauding wild beasts," said Mr. Mwambire.

The idea to erect the electric fence

around the national park was welcomed by Ganze District Commissioner Mr. Ibrahim Diba.

Mr. Diba said wild beasts normally sneak out of the national park to search for water and food and said if the area gets fenced off the problem could be solved.

The administrator said the animals sometimes lack water within the parks due to drought and said there was need for KWS to construct water pans and avail more water sources for the beasts.

"The few water pans found within the national park normally dry up during drought periods and thus the wild animals are forced to look for alternative ways of getting the com-

modity thus their sneaking out," said Mr Diba.

Mr Diba urged KWS personnel to intensify their patrols along the park boundaries to control the wild beasts from sneaking into farms.

He said that could serve as a temporary solution in controlling the human wildlife conflict which is normally experienced in some part of Ganze district.

"As KWS looks for a long lasting solution to control human and wildlife conflicts along the borders of Tsavo national park, the KWS askaris should carry out frequent patrols along the border lines to keep off the animals from reaching peoples farms" said Mr Diba.

## Ahadi opposes hefty retirement packages

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

AHADI Kenya Trust has strongly opposed the proposed hefty retirement package for President Kibaki, Prime Minister Raila Odinga, VP Kalonzo Musyoka and other State officer's.

The Non-Governmental Organisation Executive Director Stanley Kamau said the proposal should be rejected and instead be awarded to the old people in the country who are languishing in poverty.

He noted that many poor old people have been suffering for lack of basic needs like food, water and shelter and urged the Government to set such amount of money to the aged since the retirement fund introduced few years ago never materialized.

"We know many of these old people are retired officers who have served the country for many years. Why are the rich receiving such huge amount of money while the people are left suffering? They receive very little pension which is not enough. The funds for the age never reach there," said Kamau.

He was speaking at Mweiga-Township, Kieni West district in Nyeri County during the end of the year party for the aged where he donated assorted foodstuff, blankets and other materials.

The function organized by Purity Care Foundation was attended



Ahadi Kenya Trust Executive Director Stanley Kamau (left) distributes blankets, foodstuff and other materials to the aged at Mweiga Township, Kieni West district in Nyeri County. More than 200 old people benefited from the event organized by Purity Care Foundation. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

by over 220 senior citizens who were treated in music and funfair before being given donations.

The foundation Chief Executive Joyce Kairu urged Kenyans to join hands in caring for the aged.

"We would like the government to implement fully the pilot project of the elderly so that the old can benefit. They are suffering so much since they also need health-care and basic needs," said Kairu.

The Bill proposing the send off package would also benefit House Speaker Kenneth Marende, Deputy Speaker Farah Maalim, Deputy Prime Ministers Uhuru Kenyatta and Musalia Mudavadi.

## Influx of illegal firearms pose threat in Kilifi

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE government has beefed up security along border points to stem the influx of illegal firearms in the country.

Kilifi County Commissioner Mr Erastus Ekidor said most illegal firearms sneaked into the country through the porous Somali border end up in wrong hands and in most cases are used to fan criminal activities.

"Criminal gangs such as Al Shaabab have taken advantage of the porous border between Kenya and Somali to sneak arms which are later used to fan crime in the country" said Mr Ekidor. The commissioner at the same time urged the public to volunteer information to the police and other related

security organs to enable them apprehend those smuggling arms in the country.

"For a long time Kenyans have left security matters to the police and we are encouraging them to embrace community policing to help address acts of lawlessness," said Mr Ekidor.

He was speaking at Kilifi county hall during a stakeholders meeting coordinated by Kenya focal point on small arms department.

Mr Amos Katana who is an official from the department blamed the high rate of crime in the area to the proliferation of small arms. He said the department had launched a massive crackdown on illegal arms but they were experiencing hurdles as the vice is perpetrated on a daily basis.

The official expressed fears that the illegal fire arms could be used to commit crimes during the campaign period adding that his department and other security agencies have been placed on high alert. "As we head to the General Elections, the illegal fire arms may be used to cause violence and I urge Kenyans to be vigilante and report such cases," said Mr Katana. Meanwhile, parents in Kilifi County have been challenged to develop a saving culture to help boost their financial status and sustain their children in schools.

The chief executive officer of Kilifi teachers' savings and credit society, Mr Daniel Masha, said that most students drop out of school as their parents cannot raise the exorbitant fee required to sus-

tain them in schools.

Mr Masha challenged parents to embrace a saving culture as some of the economically endowed individuals in the country owe their success to savings they had accumulated over the years and thus the need to emulate the practice. "The high poverty levels facing most families in Kilifi County have been caused by lack of strategy in the management of finances and I am urging you to explore the saving culture," said Mr Masha.

The CEO was speaking at the Sacco head offices in Kilifi during a ceremony to reward parents who were saving money for their children through Malaika Junior Saving account, a product of the Sacco.

## Busia Council to spend Ksh22m on projects

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE County Council of Busia will spend a total of Ksh22million Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) on development projects during the current financial year.

Addressing members of the press at his office recently, the Busia County Council works officer Christopher Omondi called upon the project management committees to monitor the projects within their respective areas to ensure the projects are properly done.

"I am urging all the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASPDAP) committee to work closely with the contractors who have been given the tender to undertake the council projects within their respective areas in order to ensure the projects are properly done before payment is made," said the works officer.

He said the projects will provide employment opportunities especially to the majority of job seekers hence improving on their standards of living.

"The council projects will provide employment opportunities to the unemployed youth within their respective areas," said Omondi.

Among the projects being undertaken include opening of new rural access roads and rehabilitation of the existing road network, dispensaries, improvement of drainage systems and opening channels around markets and garbage collection among others.

The works officer at the same time appealed to local residents to act as watch-dogs by monitoring the activities of both the project management committees from their respective areas and the contractors in order to avoid shoddy work on the projects that were started in July 2012 and expected to be completed by July 2013.

The rural access roads being undertaken include a three kilometre road from Bujumba - Bumala in Butula constituency and a 2.6kilometre rural access road from Bukiri -Nabutuki in Funyula constituency in Samia district.

"The other project include the construction of a paediatric ward at Tingolo Dispensary in Butula which when completed is expected to serve the locals who had been travelling all the way to Khunyangu district hospital for medical attention," he said.

"Once completed, the health facility will save the locals especially expectant mothers from travelling all the way to Khunyangu District hospital," he said.



By HENRY OWINO

## Egerton scoops the EAC social media platform award

EGERTON University is the overall winner in the Ministry of the East African Community four-month EAC Inter-University Social media challenge.

The four month campaign workshop was organized by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. The seminar saw varsity students showcase their creativity through a range of activities including debates, poetry, themed events, games, environmental cleanup exercises, sports, community outreaches, and public forums among other disciplines.

The workshop also provided students with opportunities to share information on EAC integration and its benefits. Close to one million students from Kenya's universities are said to be more enlightened on matters of integration on the East African Community (EAC). This is courtesy of social media campaign that proved popular with many students.

Students then shared their activities photos' on Facebook that generated comments and conversations around the EAC. Egerton University student leader, Raphael KyeeMbatha steered the institution to glory after he emerged the overall winner in the challenge that was conducted through the social media platform-face book, twitter and blogging.

"With nearly 70 million students in the region, the tools shade some insight into integration process, benefits and opportunities available to us upon graduation within the region," explained the deputy Secretary General East Africa Community students union (EACSU).

On engagement through face book, Mbatha explained that he has embarked on sensitizing students in the connect vukaborder page on the need of the integration process and the various opportunities there in.

"I sparked debates on the various challenges of the EAC integration process and the way the ministry could tackle them to realize its ultimate goal of integration," he said and added:

"The response was diverse and promising. I also engaged my Egerton students. They shared and asked many questions about the EAC to the Vukaborder page administrators."

During the EAC week, the Bsc Tourism and Hospitality Management engaged the students in various activities which were creative in nature to make our university win the ultimate prize. A road show was organized and staging at different points of the university with motorcade of total number of 8 cars

Activities ranged from clean-up exercises, debates, agricultural activities, swimming competitions all in the EAC week. Other activities in which the students were engaged included

participating in the EAC environment day where students planted trees seedlings in the environs of the university.

The university also collected 6600 petitions with Maseno University coming second with only 3000 petitions for their EAC week

Egerton University EAC champions will now enjoy a fully paid tour around the EAC partner states including Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and Kenya where they will visit major universities.

Maseno University the first runners up, was followed by Moi University and lastly the University of Nairobi. Other universities that were invited to take part in the challenge are; Kenyatta University, Daystar University, Africa Nazarene University, Catholic University, Kenya Methodist University.

Others were Kenya Polytechnic College University, Narok University College, Multimedia University College KCA University, and St Paul University also participated.

At the award ceremony, EAC Minister, Musa Sirma noted that the objective of the challenge which was

launched in September, 2012, was to create awareness among university students aged between 18 and 35 years on the benefits of the federation.

Dubbed Connect,Vuka Border, the campaign utilized social media platforms specifically twitter, facebook and blogs to engage students of the participating varsities.

"This campaign has offered the youth an opportunity to identify themselves with the ongoing regional programmes, raise issues affecting them and share their experiences," said Permanent Secretary, Ministry of EAC, ChiboliShakaba. During the campaign period, students from the competing universities held week-long sensitization activities at their respective institutions on the benefits and opportunities of EAC under the theme Connect, Interact, Integrate.

Activities included public speaking and poetry nights, games, environmental clean-up exercises and door to door sensitization programmes. The students documented them through pictures, videos and blogs and shared them on social media platforms.

The universities were judged

on the creativity, relevance and how much they shared/popularized their activities on the social media platforms. In addition to this, the students collected petitions which they managed to present to their respective Vice Chancellors to entrench EAC week into their calendars.

While Egerton University bagged a total of 6,229 petitions, Maseno University collected 3,511, Moi University 2,488, and the University of Nairobi 365. Deputy Director of social affairs, Kennedy Nyambati says according to recent studies, 85 per cent of University/College students in Kenya are on Facebook.

"Facebook therefore provides the best platform for creating awareness and educating university students on the EAC integration process," Nyambati noted. Adding that the challenges faced should be aimed at encouraging university students to support EAC integration process.

"Challenge the students to petition their respective universities to include the EAC Week as an annual calendar activity. This way, we shall achieve our vision," he proposed.



George Magunga receiving an award from Suma Sirma, the Minister for East Africa Community.  
Photo/Henry Owino

## Pensioners demand review of scheme

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE government pensioners are demanding for an immediate review of their monthly pension scheme to enable them cope with the rising cost of living.

The over 7,000 pensioners affiliated to the Kenya Association of Retired Officers (KARO) as the umbrella body complained that their plight has been left unaddressed even after making numerous demands unto the government.

The Association's officials led by their National Executive officer Karuga Gichohi said that the ever rising costs of living have almost turned some of its members into beggars despite the nation building roles they played during their terms in office.

"The government has remained impervious to our pleas on the memorandum on 'payment of pensions and other benefits to retirees' we recently wrote to the Minister for Finance Njeru Githae and are yet to get a response," added Gichohi while speaking in Nyeri town. In the memorandum, the Association described the current pension laws in the country as archaic since they are 'oppressive, retrogressive and do not reflect the current trends of paying pensions to retired public servants.'

The retirees also protested to the minister in the same memorandum that they should have their pensions regularly reviewed in tandem with the prevailing economic situations in the country, since they cannot qualify to get the old age cash transfer currently of Ksh 1,500 and which is likely to be increased.

The officials said that most of those who retired more than 13 years ago are grappling with a mere Ksh 2,500 to Ksh 4,000, going by the low salaries they received at that time.

The officials also noted though the new constitution has adequately addressed the plight of the elderly people under the Specific Application of Rights, it has failed to clearly come out on the issue of retirees.

## Bill defies the will of Kenyans

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE National Government Coordination Bill that seeks to retain chiefs and their assistants in their current roles contravenes the will of Kenyans.

When Kenyans overwhelmingly voted for the Constitution of Kenya 2010, they sealed the fate of the provincial administration in the devolved government structure.

The people of Kenya particularly ordinary citizens thought time had finally come for them to do away with the administrators who were fond of abusing their power.

For many years the chiefs and

their assistants had used the colonial Chief's Act to grab property and mishandle people with impunity.

The removal or redeployment of the provincial administrators as enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 thus came as a big relief to Kenyans who had already lost confidence in the colonial oriented, dictatorial and highly corrupt administrators.

To sneak chiefs and their assistants into the supreme law without appropriate legislation geared towards reforming them is tantamount to maintaining the *status quo*.

Immediate former Internal security minister Mr. Katoo ole Metito

should be made aware that the otherwise good name of the Government has for long been tainted by some chiefs and their assistants.

At least 90 percent of the chiefs and their assistants are corrupt and perform their duties without due regard to the law of the land and human rights. Many chiefs and their assistants are arrogant, bossy, greedy and lack even the slightest courtesy for all those people placed below them.

Illicit brews, insecurity and poverty in communities are in most cases perpetuated by chiefs and their assistants because the administrators pursue personal selfish and greed interests at

the expense of citizens' welfare.

However, if this cadre of staff must be retained for security and general administrative functions at the grassroots then they must undergo a vetting process like magistrates and judges.

The vetting process will like what happened in the Judiciary provide Kenyans with an opportunity to tell the untold stories about the administrators.

This will no doubt assist the Government to weed out the wicked ones and retain those who embrace the fact that they are servants of the people and not masters so as for the personnel to become appealing to citizens.

For instance there is an assistant

chief in Bungoma south district who residents say treats them with contempt and demands bribes from those seeking services in his office including children pursuing identity cards.

The assistant chief is also fond of causing antagonism in communities in order to benefit from the spoils.

He recently boasted that he will always use his ill gotten wealth to buy protection and free himself from accusations from people who he said are very poor and cannot win a case against him.

The assistant chief made the remark after it emerged that citizens in his area of jurisdiction are very bitter about his style of leadership as he allegedly presided over looting of public institutions including cattle dips in his area.



# Transition to devo

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE Transition to Devolved Government Act, No. 1 of 2012, is a facilitative law of transition to county governments. It is a fulfillment of the Constitution schedule 6, section 15 that mandates parliament to enact a legislation that transfers functions to counties in phases. It recognizes that after the elections, the county governments will become operational, the functions of the counties domicile in the national government as it inherits the functions of the old central government. In order not to have county governments in place without functions, the Act provides for the requisite phased transfer of functions and has created a Transition Authority to manage the process for three years.

### The Transition Authority

The Authority has been vested with powers to facilitate and coordinate the transition to the devolved system of government. In doing so, the Authority is to

- (a) facilitate the transfer of functions and powers between the national and county governments as outlined in the constitution
- (b) determine the resource requirements for each of the functions
- (c) develop a framework for comprehensive and effective transfer of functions
- (d) co-ordinate with the relevant authority to
- (i) assist in the development of the budget for county governments during the first

- (ii) phase of the transition period; establish the status of ongoing processes, development programmes and projects and make recommendations to pave way for the co-ordinated management, reallocation or transfer to either level of government during the transition period; and
- (iii) ensure successful transition to devolved system of government;
- (e) prepare and validate an inventory of all the existing assets and liabilities of government, other public entities and local authorities;
- (f) make recommendations for the effective management of assets of the national and county governments;
- (g) provide mechanism for the transfer of assets which may include vetting the transfer of assets during the transition period;
- (h) develop criteria to determine the transfer of functions from the national to county governments, including:—
  - (i) criteria to guide the transfer of functions to county governments
  - (ii) criteria to determine the transfer of previously-shared assets, liabilities and staff of the government and local authorities;
- (i) carry out an audit of the existing human resource of the government and local authorities;
- (j) assess the capacity needs of

*It is all systems go as the country transits from a highly centralized government that has had an overbearing control over sub national authorities. A new law providing a legal and institutional framework for a co-ordinated transition to the devolved system of government is already in place. The law lays out phases of transfer of functions to county governments, validation and transfer of assets and liabilities of the outgoing public institutions and establishes a neutral authority with various mandates including crafting the initial budget for county governments.*

- (k) national and county governments;
- (k) recommend the necessary measures required to ensure that the national and county governments have adequate capacity during the transition period to enable them undertake their assigned functions;
- (l) co-ordinate and facilitate the provision of support and assistance to national and county governments in building their capacity to govern and provide services effectively;
- (m) advise on the effective and efficient rationalization and deployment of the human resource to either level of government;
- (n) submit monthly reports to the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution (CIC) and the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) on the progress that has been

registered in the implementation of the transition to the devolved system of government;

### Powers of the Authority

- The Authority has powers to
- (a) gather relevant information, including requisition of reports, records, documents or any information from any source, including state departments or public entities;
  - (b) compel the production of any information necessary in the discharge of its duties
  - (c) interview any person, groups or members of organizations or institutions;
  - (d) hold inquiries and investigations
  - (e) make recommendations and facilitate the distribution of assets to the National and County Government; and
  - (f) undertake any activity necessary to effectively carry out its functions.

### Organs of the Authority:

The Authority is to be composed of

- (a) a chairperson and eight other members appointed by the President;
- (b) the head of public service and secretary to the cabinet;
- (c) Permanent Secretaries in the ministries of local government, public service, finance, planning and justice
- (d) the Attorney-General and the Authority's chief executive officer are ex-officio members with no rights to vote;

### Qualification of Chairperson and Members

To qualify for appointment as a chairperson, the applicant must

- (a) hold a masters degree from a recognized university
- (b) have a distinguished career in senior management position in either private or public sector
- (c) hold at least fifteen years post qualification professional experience
- (d) satisfy the requirements of Chapter six of the Constitution

### Members of the authority on the hand require:

- (a) a degree from a recognized university
- (b) a distinguished career in their respective field
- (c) at least ten years post qualification professional experience
- (d) satisfies the requirements of Chapter six of the Constitution

The law disqualifies applicants who are:

- members of Parliament or County Assembly;
- members of governing body of a political party;
- elected or nominated member of a local authority;
- members of a Commission established under the Constitution;
- undischarged of bankrupt;
- removed from office for contravening the Constitution or any other law;
- Unable to meet any statutory obligations.

The law provides for the appointment of a secretary who is the accounting officer responsible for—

- (a) the implementation of the decisions made by the Authority;
- (b) the formation and development of an efficient administration;



Kinuthia Wamwangi, Transitional Authority chairman.



# Involved Government



Nairobi City Hall. This is where Nairobi Governor Dr. Evans Kidero will be housed.

- (a) Existence of a legislation in relation to the function applied for;
- (b) Existence of a framework for service delivery to implement the function;
- (c) Whether a county government has identified or established administrative units related to the function;
- (d) Whether the county government has undertaken a capacity assessment in relation to the function;
- (e) Arrangements for and the extent of further decentralization of the function and provision of related services by the county government;
- (f) The availability of the required infrastructure and systems to deliver the function;
- (g) The presence of the necessary financial management systems;
- (h) An approved plan in relation to the function; and
- (i) any other variable as may be prescribed after consultations between the Authority, county governments and the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution and the Commission on Revenue Allocation.

- (c) the organization, control and management of staff;
- (d) maintaining accurate records on financial matters and resource use;
- (e) ensuring the drawing up and approval of the required budget; and
- (f) performing any other duties as may from time to time be assigned by the Authority

To qualify, the applicant must have at least—

- (a) a masters degree from a recognized university
- (b) ten years experience in a management position.

### Guiding Principles

In performing its functions, the Authority is to be guided by principles which include

- Accountable to the people and ensure their participation
- Facilitate the transition in a transparent, objective and fair manner
- Promote and sustain fair procedures in its operation
- Non partisan and non political in its operations
- Apply and promote national values

### Constitutional Implementation

Commission is mandated to monitor and oversee the transition process to devolved government.

### Transition phases

Transition is to be done in two phase: phase one means the period between 9th March, 2012 (when the act commenced) and the date of the first elections. Phase two means the period between the date of the first elections and three years after the elections.



Charles Nyachae, CIC chairman



Micah Cheserem, CRA chairman

### In phase one, the Authority is to

- (a) audit assets and liabilities of the government, to establish the asset, debts and liabilities of the government;
- (b) audit assets and liabilities of local authorities, to establish the asset, debts and liabilities of each Local Authority;
- (c) audit local authority infrastructure in the counties, to establish the number and functionality of plant and equipment in Local Authorities;
- (d) audit the government infrastructure in the counties, to establish the number and functionality of plant and equipment for the purpose of vesting them to either level of government;
- (e) audit the government staff in counties, to establish the number of staff in each county by cadre, grades, gender, age and qualification;
- (f) audit the Local Authority staff

- in the counties, to establish the number of local authority staff in each county by cadre, grades, gender, age & qualification;
- (g) facilitate civic education, to ensure civic education on devolution is commenced and co-ordinated;
- (h) facilitate the initial preparation of county budgets, to ensure such budgets are agreed upon;
- (i) facilitate the preparation of county profiles, to ensure that the profile of counties are produced published and publicized;
- (j) carry out an analysis of functions and competency assignment and ensure plan for distribution of functions and competency is published necessary Acts amended;
- (k) provide mechanism for closure and transfer, of public records and information;
- (l) facilitate the development of county public finance

- management system;
- (m) provide a mechanism, for the transition of government and local authority employees;
- (n) provide for a mechanism for the transfer of government net assets and liabilities to national and county, governments.
- (o) provide mechanisms for transfer of assets and liabilities which may include vetting transfer of assets during the transitional period.
- (p) provide for a mechanism that will secure assets and liabilities held by the Local Authorities;

and **In Phase Two**, the Authority undertakes the following activities—

- (a) complete any activity that may be outstanding from Phase One;
- (b) oversee the transfer of functions from the national government to the county government;
- (c) facilitate the county governments in the performance of their functions;
- (d) any other activity that may be necessary to enable county governments carry out their functions.

### Procedure for Transfers

In at least 30 days before the practical measures to build the capacity of the county to enable the transfer take place within the shortest time possible

### Criteria for transfer of functions

Functions to the County governments are to be transferred subject to;

### Assets and Liabilities

Assets and liabilities of any state institution or local authorities is not allowed to be transferred without the permission of the Authority. During phase one, the authority has to consult with National Treasury, the Commission on Revenue Allocation, the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Lands before any assets and liabilities are transferred.

In **phase two**, the authority has to consult with National Treasury, the Commission on Revenue Allocation and the Cabinet Secretary responsible for matters relating to intergovernmental relations and lands.

### Progress report

The law directs the Authority to submit a progress report in every three months to the President, Parliament, the Commission for Implementation of the Constitution and Commission on Revenue Allocation.

The progress report includes—

- (a) status on transfer of functions to county governments;
- (b) any impediments to the transition programme;
- (c) recommendation to address specific concerns identified by the Authority ; and
- (d) any other information of concern relating to the functions of the Authority.

The law stipulates that consequent reports after the first elections are to be submitted to Parliament and to the relevant county assemblies and county executives committees.



# Judiciary anticipates large number of cases from polls

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE judiciary anticipates to handle a minimum of 500 election related cases. According to Lady Justice Helen Omondi who is a member of the Judicial Working Committee on Election Preparations, the number of aggrieved parties seeking legal redress could also rise due to increased public confidence in the judiciary.

"Among the challenges that the judiciary expects to face in elections related matters is increase of a number of cases due to increased number of political positions been contested which are a total of six in number," she explains.

She however says that all election related disputes will be settled within six months after the election date, and some judicial officers have been appointed for this purpose. Judicial officers are also under instruction to be more gender sensitive while handling political gender violence cases.

Lady justice Omondi said that women are more vulnerable espe-

cially due to primitive social cultural practice during the electioneering period, but the judiciary will be more keen and extra careful on gender related violence during the electioneering period and thereafter.

"We have no specific laws protecting women in political violence, but we have the criminal penal code which will be applied together with other election laws and Acts. Our officers have been trained on gender and election matters and they are fully prepared to protect the rights of the women including aspirants, their campaigners and supporters. The law and courts will protect them against any discrimination and they are encouraged to campaign without fear of intimidation from anyone," said the

The judiciary in partnership with other stakeholders has initiated a number of programs to protect women against any form of violence during the electioneering period.

Among them is protection of witnesses who will testify in court on elections related criminal and dispute

related cases.

She said that judiciary, office of the Director of Public Prosecution and the police are working as a team to ensure that security of women was guaranteed during the electioneering period.

"We are also discussing on modalities of witness protection. Many women get scared of pursuing their cases after their witnesses are threatened. This has remained a major challenge in dispensing justice, which encourages political violence against women. But I can assure women and the perpetrators of such crimes that it is no longer business as usual, they will all get justice and I encourage them to pursue justice when aggrieved," said the Judge.

Some legal technicalities that have been overtaken by time have also been addressed and judicial officers including researchers have been trained on how to handle and address such technicalities in accordance with the constitution.

Any political disputes and vio-

lence related cases must be handled and determined before the elections date, which will give the judiciary enough time to handle electoral disputes arising from the March general elections.

The judiciary posts Magistrates and judges to all parts of the country to handle the disputes and other elections related cases including the marginalized areas to ensure effective and timely dispensation of justice. Gichugu law courts principal magistrate Mr MuraguriMwangi said unlike in the past, the judicial officers are now fully prepared to handle election matters.

"Judicial officers have undergone comprehensive training on election issues which will be very useful in dispensation of justice. We are fully prepared for the elections even at the constituency and county levels. Involvement of magistrates in handling the disputes will ensure that electoral matters are heard in good time, it will save a lot of time and resources and no one has any reason not to seek legal redress now," said the Principal mag-

istrate.

Gichugu in Kirinyaga County, which is among hotspots due to re-emergence of Mungiki criminal gang, which normally takes advantage of elections campaign to either harass, intimidate or engage in other criminal activities.

## Cleric blames national ills on politicians

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

A CHURCH minister has attributed the myriad problems facing Kenyans to the country's political leadership. The Church of Christ in Africa (C.C.A) Kakamega diocese Bishop Richard Arua claims that the politicians' activities and utterances in most cases attract God's wrath.

Bishop Arua was categorical that Kenyans suffer from a range of issues including poverty, hunger, insecurity and calamities because the politicians have little regard for the church, mosque and even songs that are meant to praise and worship God. He reprimanded politicians and their supporters across the country for paraphrasing hymns to attack and belittle their opponents unfairly.

The prelate appealed to other church leaders across the denominational divide not to allow politicians to use churches as battle grounds for political supremacy.

"Allowing churches to be used by politicians as campaign fields for earthly leadership defeats the purpose for which they were constructed," bishop Arua said.

The churches and mosques, Bishop Arua added are sacred places where people go to seek blessings and heavenly interventions but not to advance witch-hunt and smear campaign.

He asked Christians not to allow their children to be misused by politicians during the electioneering period as one way of ensuring that Kenya remains peaceful during and after the election.

Election violence, Bishop Arua said can be a thing of the past if the youth shun politicians who promote negative ethnicity and peddle lies about their opponents. The church minister challenged all those seeking to be elected to tell Kenyans what they want to do and how instead of engaging in smear campaign.

Bishop Arua, however asked voters not to be moved by euphoria during electioneering period adding that for this country to have a focused leadership people should vote based on their own conscience.

He further challenged Kenyans to remain focused on hard work instead of following politicians who he warned may eventually dump them immediately after winning or losing the election. "Do not be cheated that if one of your own wins the presidency your life or social status will improve without struggle," bishop Arua cautioned.

The prelate underscored the importance of hard work saying that it is the backbone of the country's economic growth hence the entire citizenry. Bishop Arua was speaking recently at Wacheka C.C.A church in Bungoma County during a Sunday service.

# Poor performance irks parents in Nyeri

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 50 parents of Thunguma Primary School are up in arms following the ranking of the school in the last position in Nyeri County during last year's KCPE results.

Waving twigs, the irked parents blamed teachers and the school committee for the poor performance and accused them of boycotting classes at the expense of the pupils.

The parents protested that some of the teachers are very lazy as they have overstayed in the school for more than 25 years. They denied claims that the pupils have been skipping classes to do casual jobs in the neighbouring coffee plantations and quarries around the school.

"The school no longer convenes parents meetings and the school committee has retained very old members, some of who are even 80 years old. We are calling for the immediate dissolution of the committee to help the school reclaim its lost glory," said Samuel Ndung'u who is a parent in the school. Despite efforts by education officials to intervene, the parents paid a deaf ear and disrupted learning environment at the school.

The school had a mean score of 181 marks with three students scoring less than 100 marks after 45 students sat for the KCPE exams last year.

The best student had 354 marks. Fifteen students had over 250 marks out of the possible 500 marks.

The school which was started in 1964 has a population of 300 pupils and 11 teachers.

Central Province chairman of Kenya Primary Schools heads associations Nicolas Gathemia absolved teachers from the accusations and urged parents to instead sit down, dialogue and find a lasting solution in the

school. Nyeri District Examination officer Ndegwa Wahome who was present told that parents that he will chair a parents meeting soon in order to find a lasting solution.

"I also urge the parents, teachers and pupils to join hands in order to improve the performance of the school," said Wahome.

The school headmaster John Kibira blamed the parents for absenteeism of pupils saying many of the pupils are out of class doing commercial work instead of concentrating on class work. A local leader George Miatu blamed the Ministry of Education for being reluctant in ensuring that the school performances improve.



Angry parents of Thunguma Primary School, Nyeri town demonstrate outside the school recently after the school was ranked last in Nyeri County after the last year's KCPE results. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

# Bogus colleges poised for stiffer penalties

By PETER MUTUKU

INSTITUTIONS that offer degrees through universities that are not accredited risk a fine of Ksh 10 million or a three year jail term. This follows the enactment of universities Act 2012 which seeks to regulate the operations of the institutions of higher learning.

The new law also requires that the Cabinet Secretary in charge of Higher Education publishes in at least three national newspapers, the lists of universities accredited to undertake uni-

versity education in Kenya. The publication is to be done at the beginning of every year and every quarter of the year after that. Foreign universities would be required to submit proof of accreditation from their countries of origin.

Higher Education Minister Prof Margaret Kamar says the new law comes at an opportune moment to help the Government to monitor foreign universities. "This provision would strengthen our surveillance on foreign universities," said the minister.

There have been cases of universities not accredited offering degree courses to unsuspecting students but the trend may soon be a thing of the past once the law becomes operational. The law, which provides for the establishment, accreditation and governance of public and private universities, establishes the Commission for University Education as a successor to the current Commission for Higher Education. The new law also seeks to regulate the location of university campuses and compels universities to have a student's body, elected by

students.

Under the new law, students with disciplinary cases have a reprieve as they can now get legal representation within the institution during the execution of their cases. The Act establishes the Universities Fund and also provides for procedure for placement of the Government sponsored students to universities and colleges.

In the Act, both the chancellor and the vice chancellor in public universities are to serve for a term of five years and shall be eligible for a further term of five years.



# Council unveils strategic plan in devolved unit

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Municipal Council of Machakos has unveiled its Strategic Plan which seeks to foster a steady service delivery in the devolved unit.

The Clerk S.A. Abdullahi says the plan outlines a clear picture of the current status of the council and future aspirations of the local authority.

The clerk said the council is currently faced with inadequate staff, lacks scheduled council committee meetings and has

weak communication mechanism.

They said that other challenges facing the council include mismanagement of council resources, poor maintenance of public utilities, poor management of garbage collection, delays in completion of projects, selective enforcement of Council by laws, failure to complete LASDAP Projects and the culture of business as usual among councillors and staff.

He said the council is currently

reviewing its by-laws to align them with the requirements of Vision 2030.

He said the council will strive to provide an enabling environment that promotes investment and Local economic development. "The Council will strive to play its role in the attainment of the millennium development goals and Kenya Vision 2030," he added.

The clerk said that the council enjoys overwhelming goodwill from the public and plans

to tap on its strategic location along Nairobi Mombasa highway to attract more investments in the area.

He said the council was exploring Public Private Partnerships to help promote investment in the area.

The clerk at the same time said that the council had enhanced its governance structures by creating institutions that bring checks and balances

He said the proposed development of techno city is likely

to enhance investment in the area and urged local investors to exploit the opportunity.

Mr Abdullahi further listed inadequate funds from Central Government, review of the Local Government Act to align it with the new constitution, implementation of the Nairobi Metropolitan development plans, implementation of the new labour laws, review of Council boundaries among the emerging issues that must be accorded priority.

## New traffic rules reduce accident rates

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

ROAD accidents have reduced by 20 per cent after the Traffic Act became operational in December.

Traffic Police Commandant Benson Githinji said recently that after the laws were enforced at the beginning of December, the accidents have reduced but the department will seek to bring them down further.

So far over 20,000 people have been arraigned in court and over Ksh 30 million collected in form of fines for flouting the new traffic rules.

However, he said over 3,000 people have died on the Kenyan roads including drivers, passengers, boda bodas operators and pillion cyclist.

Githinji who was accompanied by the head of the (NRSC) secretariat Cosmas Ngeso was speaking during a meeting between members of the National Roads Safety Council (NRSC) and stakeholders at Nyeri Information hall.

At the same time, the commandant warned traffic bosses and OCPDs that firm action will be taken against those who engage in corruption saying they will face the full force of the law.

"The OCPDs have been empowered constitutionally over the traffic matters in their areas of jurisdiction. I want to warn them that they will face the full force of the law if they will not work as per the law," he added.

He warned that traffic officers who solicit for bribes on the roads that they will not be spared adding that few traffic officers have been arrested taking bribes and actions taken. Githinji said that more changes are in the offing following the appointment of the new inspector of police.

The meeting involved matatu operators, law enforcement including OCPDs and traffic base officers.

Similar meetings have been held in Kakamega, Kisumu and Nakuru counties.

The commandant urged the drivers and pedestrians to be extra careful in order to save lives.

"We shall not allow vehicles to be driven like rockets. I want to warn them that they will face the music if arrested," he cautioned.

He warned boda boda operators that they will face the full force of the law if arrested driving while



**Traffic commandant who is also the chairman of National Road Safety Council (NRSC) Benson Githinji (in police uniform) with the head of the (NRSC) secretariat Cosmas Ngeso in Nyeri town recently after holding a meeting with stakeholders.** Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

drunk.

Meanwhile, the government pensioners are demanding for an immediate review of their monthly pension scheme to enable them cope with the rising cost of living.

The over 7,000 pensioners affiliated to the Kenya Association of Retired Officers (KARO) as the umbrella body complained that their plight has been left unaddressed even after making numerous demands unto the government.

The Association's officials led by their National Executive officer Karuga Gichohi said that the ever rising costs of living have almost turned some of its members beggars, despite the nation building roles they played during their

terms in office.

"The government has remained impervious to our pleas on the memorandum on 'payment of pensions and other benefits to retirees' we recently wrote to the Minister for Finance Njeru Githae and are yet to get a response," added Gichohi while speaking in Nyeri town.

In the memorandum, the Association described the current pension laws in the country as archaic since they are 'oppressive, retrogressive and do not reflect the current trends of paying pensions to retired public servants.'

The retirees also protested to the minister in the same memorandum that they should have their

pensions regularly reviewed in tandem with the prevailing economic situations in the country, since they cannot qualify to get the old age cash transfer currently of Ksh 1,500 and which is likely to be increased.

The officials said that most of those who retired more than 13 years ago are grappling with a mere Ksh 2,500 to Ksh 4,000, going by the low salaries they received at that time.

The officials also noted though the new constitution has adequately addressed the plight of the elderly people under the Specific Application of Rights, it has failed to clearly come out on the issue of retirees.

## State issues stern warning to Kilifi witch-hunters

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE government has launched investigations into the killing of 12 elderly people in bizarre circumstances on claims of practicing witchcraft in Ganze District of Kilifi County.

Vitengeni District Officer Mr Vincent Kibara said that stern action will be taken against individuals behind the beastly acts in the area.

Mr Kibara said at least 20 elderly people in Ganze district are killed every month adding that since the beginning of this year about 20 elderly people have lost their lives in mysterious acts.

"The government has launched investigations into the killing of elderly people in Ganze district so that we can get into the root cause of the beastly acts," said Mr Kibara.

The officer made the remarks at a rescue center which houses suspected wizards at Mrima wa Ndege in Vitengeni.

Mr Kibara said close family members were conspiring to kill their elderly relatives under the guise that they were practicing witchcraft.

He said in most cases family members refuse to cooperate with the police to give information which could help arrest the suspects.

The chairman of Ganze District Cultural Association Mr Kenga Mangi condemned the killings of the elderly people.

Mr. Mangi who coordinates the rescue center said the killings are unfortunate adding that most acts are executed by the youth.

He said the abandoning of the Mijikenda culture and traditions by most families had contributed to the ill treatment accorded to elderly persons in the community.

"Old people develop grey hairs and red eyes are mostly targeted for killing as the youth associate their old age to witchcraft," said Mr Mangi.

Mr Mangi said the rescue centre was established to provide refuge to the aged people who flee from their homes upon being suspected as wizards.

He however said the centre is also involved in reuniting the elderly persons with their families.

The DO blamed the vice to the low literacy levels in the area adding that in some cases the youth want to disinherit their aging parents.



# Butula CDF committee refutes NTA report

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUTULA Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee members have refuted claims contained in a report by the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) that some Ksh36million for Butula constituency development funds cannot be accounted for.

Addressing members of the press at the CDF boardroom recently, the CDF members led by Butula Constituency Development Fund committee chairman George Andrew Kwena refuted the NTA report saying that no project funds had been misappropriated as claimed.

"As the chairman of Butula Constituency Development Fund committee, I want to state that no project funds had been misappropriated as stated in the recent National Taxpayers Association report. The government had disbursed funds to facilitate the completion of all incomplete projects and other ongoing projects and as a committee we utilized the said funds well," said the CDF committee chairman.

Among some of the projects that the National Taxpayers Association claimed to be non-existent was Benga Technical Institute, a project that was started four years ago with a Bill of Quantity valued at Ksh16million while the current Bill of Quantity from the Ministry of Public Works stands at Ksh34million.

"It is wrong on the part of the National Taxpayers Association to claim that the difference of Ksh18million has gone to waste as the said project is at the completion stage," said Kwena.

He at the same time took issue with the NTA over claims that some Ksh5million that had been channelled towards the Rural Electrification programme could not be accounted for.

"The said fund is available and

we have availed an official receipt from the Kenya Rural Electrification acknowledging the receipt of the amount," he said.

The CDF chairman invited any other persons wishing to pay a visit to any of the CDF projects to verify and obtain all the correct facts regarding Butula CDF projects.

However, the CDF committee accused a section of local politicians of taking advantage of the report to spread malicious rumours aimed at tarnishing the name of the committee and the outgoing MP Alfred Odhiambo during their political campaigns.

"A section of local politicians vying for various elective political seats in the constituency have been peddling lies through the NTA report to tarnish the good name of the CDF committee members and the outgoing legislator," they said.

The outgoing Butula legislator Alfred Odhiambo gave himself a clean bill of health saying when he was elected MP; he did everything at his disposal to ensure all the projects that had been initiated by his predecessor Christine Mango were completed.

"The National Taxpayers Association is being used by my political rivals in the area to hold a smear campaign against me. When I was elected the area MP, I made sure all the projects initiated by the former legislator, Christine Mango were completed before I started embarking on new projects which I believe have been done well," said the former legislator, adding that the National Taxpayers Association should work as an independent entity instead of being used by politicians to spoil the names of others.



Martin Napisa, NTA Western Regional Coordinator, addressing the crowd.

# Kieni farmer's set to benefit from centre

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

KIENI farmers have benefited from a Ksh 2 million Information centre where farmers can get the latest farming and marketing information.

The Ksh 2 million information centre was put up with assistance from Help Self Help Centre (HSHC), a Non -Governmental Organisation from Scandinavian countries.

The centre based in Narumoru town is equipped with modern computers which are all connected to the internet where farmers can browse to get latest farming trends.

The centre also serves as a training ground for the farmers on basic computer, internet and mobile phones use.

The ultra modern Information centre for use by local farmers was opened by Kieni East DO Deborah Mwarania who said the farmers will get the latest information on soil fertility, modern farming techniques, climate change, pests and emerging crop diseases and how to control them.

The DO challenged the farmers from the area and the larger Nyeri County to embrace use of modern farming technologies in order to boost food production and reap maximum benefits.

Mwarania noted that use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) was the only way to go as farmers could get updates on the latest farming trends and emerging markets for their produce.

"There is need for farmers to keep abreast to the latest advancements in farming so that they are able to make informed choices on what to produce after accessing possible incomes and costs involved," Mwarania said.

The DO observed that the centre was one of a kind in the country and challenged local farmers to make the best use of the facility as it would help them improve on their farming and marketing produce thus improving on their livelihoods.

The Project Manager Charles Kahunja said that the centre would be run by two ICT officers who assist the farmers in their queries and find solutions from the relevant sources and has capacity to serve 1,000 farmers.

"The centre is connected to an internet application by M-farm Company that gives updated prices of most farm commodities where farmers can get from the internet or via Short Messaging Service at a subsidized price of Ksh 1 from their mobile phones," said the manager.

He added, "This, ensures that farmers are kept abreast on the best prices for their produce through the updates from M-FARM,"

The project manager added that the centre not only serves as an information sharing platform for farmers but also provides up to date information on crop diseases surveillance and forest destruction.

He however observed illiteracy and low levels of education amongst local farmers were major challenges of the project but were quick to add that those who could not get the concepts of the project were advised to seek assistance of fellow farmers or from learned relatives on the information they needed.

# Food security kitty receives a major boost

By HENRY OWINO

THE country's food security kitty has received a grant of Ksh 617.6 million from Japan.

The money has been channelled towards projects to be implemented by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The projects are; the Japanese Grant Assistance for the Rural Water Supply in Baringo County and Food Security Project for Underprivileged Farmers.

The Rural Water Supply aid is currently supporting Phase I project in Kitui and Mwingi districts from 2006-2008. Phase II of the project is currently underway in Machakos and Makueni which began in 2011.

The Grant Aid Project for Rural Water Supply will now be implemented in Baringo County, with the aim of providing safe water to residents. It is expected to benefit at least 60,000 people. The project will drill boreholes in 90 sites and provide pumping systems, elevated water tanks, transmission pipes, water kiosks and cattle troughs.

According to JICA, Kenya office, a vehicle, motorcycles and equipment will be provided under the project, as well as operation and

maintenance of the facilities at the district and community levels.

Out of the total amount disbursed, Ksh 480.7 million will be channelled towards the Assistance of Underprivileged Farmers' under 2KR project while Ksh136.9 million will be used for the Detailed Design of the Project for Baringo Water Supply.

The cheque was received by Hon Robin Njeru Githae, Minister for Finance and His Excellency Mr Toshihisa Takata, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Kenya, at the Treasury building in Nairobi. The grant agreement for the Baringo Water Supply project was also signed between the Honourable Minister, Mr Hideo Eguchi, and Chief Representative JICA.

The Assistance for Underprivileged Farmers (2KR) is designed to assist developing countries striving to achieve food sufficiency to carry out their food augmentation plans and other activities that foster economic and social development. The grant will therefore be used to purchase agricultural production machinery such as tractors, thrashers, reapers, rice planters and seedling boxes to be used for the Mwea Ir-

rigation Scheme.

The Baringo Water Supply Project that is for a Detailed Design will prepare for the subsequent construction of 90 boreholes, procurement and maintenance of equipment and training of extension workers in the District Water Office. The project will not only establish a Water Users Association but also train its members.

In his remarks, Toshihisa Takata, the Japanese Ambassador mentioned that Japan would host the fifth TICAD Summit meeting in June this year. He said successive TICAD meetings have always placed great importance on water issues among other initiatives that promote African development. He urged Kenya's government to ensure that the grant is well utilized and effectively benefit the people of Kenya.

Githae, the Finance Minister, promised that the grant would be well utilized that as qualified people would handle it even after a new government comes into place. He added that Kenya's Agricultural Sector Development Strategy for 2010-2012 (ASDS) stresses the application of agricultural technology.

"In Kenya Vision 2030, agriculture is identified as one of the key drivers of growth of economy. Agricultural productivity will be raised by a combination of proper use of fertilizer and application of appropriate agricultural technology," Githae explained.

Githae reiterated that it means using the right machinery, improved seeds as well as wise use of available water. "I hope the tools provided by this project will boost the rice production at the Mwea Irrigation Scheme," he added.

The Finance Minister called upon Kenyans to conduct free, fair and peaceful elections adding that successful elections will lay the foundation for robust and peaceful development of the country and tremendous potential.

"Kenya is a country capable of a great leap forward. It is up to Kenyans to seize this historic chance and open a new chapter in its history," the Minister anticipated.

He hoped that the aid would contribute towards the prosperity and welfare of the people of Kenya and further cement the friendly relationship between the two countries.



By BEKADZO TONDO

RESIDENTS of Coast Province can now access higher education with ease following the upgrading of two constituent colleges into fully fledged public universities.

And as local leaders welcome the move, they feel that the absence of institutions of higher learning in the area had contributed to the high rates of education apathy.

Led by the Minister for Fisheries Development Mr Amason Kingi, failure to establish universities was to blame for the little attention that residents have accorded to education in the area.

The leaders however challenged local students to make use of the two public universities to get high and quality education

They spoke as President Mwai Kibaki awarded a charter to the Pwani University which was a constituent college of Kenyatta university, thus making it a fully flagged university.

Kibaki at the same time directed the Ministry of land to resolve a land dispute between the university and a group of squatters so that the new university can start offering its higher education programs effectively.

"I have today awarded a charter to the Pwani University which started 25 years ago as Kilifi Institute of Agriculture and which in 2007 was upgraded to a constituent University college under Kenyatta University," said President Kibaki.

The head of state called for the immediate resolution of the land dispute which has seen squatters occupying part of the university's land.

The fate of the 308 squatters who are occupying about 45 acres of the university land now hangs in the balance as they may soon be rendered landless.

The squatters through their Mtaani/Kisumu Ndogo/ Kibaoni up grading scheme project have however move to court to block their eviction from the land claiming they legally owned it.

The matter is still pending at the Malindi high court awaiting hearing and determination of the case.

He further said the University which has a program of Marine Sciences has to be allowed access to the ocean to enable the institution undertake marine science research pro-

# Coast Province gets two fully fledged universities

grams.

"Pwani University which is now a fully flagged university has to have access to the ocean if they are to carry out effective research programs on marine life," said the President.

President Kibaki said his government plans to elevate 15 university colleges in the country to provide more room for the increasing number of students seeking higher education.

He said Pwani University is the fifth to be elevated after the Technical University of Mombasa received a similar status.

Kibaki urged students in the region to make use of the university to improve their academic standards and compete equally with other Kenyans for job opportunities.

The head of state admitted that this is the first time the province has been awarded a public university since in-

dependence.

"The Coast Province is one of the regions in the country which did not have a public university since the nation attained its independence but today am happy to award charters to two college universities in the area making them fully fledged universities," said Kibaki.

The Minister for Higher Education Margaret Kamar who accompanied the President said Pwani University College had attained the necessary requirements to qualify to be a fully fledged university.

Kamar thanked the management of Kenyatta which had mentored Pwani University College for five years before it attained its current status.

She said the awarding of the charters to the two colleges in the region will open up the education potential

of the local people and residents must make maximum use.

"The awarding of charters to the two university colleges in the region is a big achievement for the coastal people who can now enrol for higher learning without obstacles and I therefore urge students in this area to utilise the facilities to improve on their education standards," said Kamar.

Mr Kingi who talked on behalf of the community said the elevation of Pwani College to a fully fledged university was long overdue and will go a long way in helping to resolve historical injustices meted on coastal people.

Mr Kingi who is contesting for the governor's position Kilifi County said past governments had been discriminative in sharing education resources across the country saying some areas were given special attention compared to others.



Mombasa Polytechnic that turned into university.

## KNUT embarks on fresh recruitment exercise

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) has launched a massive campaign to recruit more members to the union.

The assistant Secretary General of the union Mr Mudzo Nzili told teachers that the strong union has more powers to fight for their grievances.

He made the remarks during the burial ceremony of the late KNUT Kilifi branch Treasurer Daniel Kititi at Kinagoni village at Kaloleni, Kilifi County.

Mr Mudzo said through unity, teachers have a strong bargaining power which can help them realise their goals.

"We must unite if we want to win the war for better remuneration. Our unity is our strength and therefore I urge teachers to register with KNUT in large numbers," said Nzili.

He said teachers who are not union members risked losing benefits awarded to members in the event of a Common Bargaining Agreement.

The Knut official called on other teacher unions at County level to cooperate fully with KNUT to champion the teachers' course.

Addressing the same gathering, Ganze District Education official Mr Julius Chonga urged the Ministry of Transport to be firm in implementing the Road Safety Rules to save the lives of Kenyans.

He said many Kenyans including teachers had lost their lives through road accidents, most of which could be avoided.

"We have had accidents that were avoidable. Some were caused by drunken drivers and others by unqualified drivers. If the traffic police department is firm, the death toll can be greatly reduce," he said.

# Insurance industry devolves to the counties

By BOB OMBATI

THE Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) has launched training programmes at the county level to enable agents enhance professionalism and strengthen the industry across the country.

IRA Commissioner and Chief Executive officer, Sammy Makove says the Authority will train a minimum of 100 agents in each county in a bid to devolve their services.

Makove notes that the Authority is partnering with the Insurance College to train the agents from various insurance companies at the counties.

He deplors the low penetration of insurance services in rural areas, adding that the authority wants to increase the uptake of services from the current 3 percent nationally to 5 percent and ensure that majority of Kenyans insure their properties against various risks.

The CEO, spoke at Nyakoe hotel, Kisii County during the graduation of 112 agents who had undergone a two-week Course on Executive Certificate of Proficiency (ECOP) in insurance, sponsored by the Authority in collaboration with the Insurance College and Association of Kenya Insurers (AKI) among other players.

The Officer accompanied by IRA Board chairman, Steve Mahinda and AKI chair, Mark Obuya urged the agents to be honest and display professionalism to maintain the image of the industry which has been tainted by unscrupulous agents who mislead clients for their selfish gain.

"The industry has rules and regulations which govern it. The agents know them and should not flout them with impunity," stated Makove

Launching the ECOP programme in Kisii County, Mahinda asked the agents to insure houses, adding that the industry was poised to grow from

3 percent to a double digit and contribute immensely to the nation's attainment of vision 2030.

Mahinda noted that Malaysia, with a population of 30 million people had engaged 120,000 agents in insurance industry, noting that it had boosted the country's economy owing to high penetration in rural areas.

The chairman pointed out that the Authority was training agents to sell insurance policies and services nationally and globally.

Kisii Central District Commissioner, Philip Soi who represented County Commissioner, Lydia Muriuki urged players in the industry to weed out imposters who had tainted the image of the industry.

Soi observed that quacks had invaded the industry and conned unsuspecting members of the public, who now have a negative perception towards the agents and the companies, leading to the low penetration.

The DC challenged the insurance companies to take advantage of the devolved system of government to invest in the counties, saying they could insure county officers and the properties to increase their earnings and the country's economy.

"The County is peaceful and endowed with massive resources which are not fully exploited. Local and international investors should seize the opportunity to invest in the county," said Soi.

Retirements Benefits Authority (RBA), Chief Executive Officer Dr Edward Odundo and the College's Director, Ben Kajwang noted the image of the industry was improving after the insurance companies resorted to employing professionals to restore their lost glory.

Kajwang observed that the Insurance College has been accredited and is internationally recognized and thus graduates could use their Certificates

and Diplomas to secure jobs both locally and globally.

Kajwang said plans are underway to elevate the College status to a university to start offering degree programmes in insurance and open constituent colleges in all the counties to enable students access the programmes easily.

He noted the demand for trained insurance agents was high, adding that those who had graduated have been employed by insurance companies to strengthen their workforce.

Abel Matoke, the College's lecturer said that over 400 students had applied for the course but only 112 were admitted after thorough screening, adding that the remaining will be trained relying on availability of financial resources.

After the graduation, various Insurance companies compete to absorb the graduates into their companies, showing the soaring demand.



# Women groups turn to agriculture to boost income

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MOST women groups in the country have resorted to borrowing loans from the Women Enterprise Funds to invest in agricultural projects.

The Women Enterprise Funds CEO Samuel Wainaina said most of the women have started agricultural projects as the main income generating activities followed by trade projects.

He said the projects are helping the women earn good profits within a short period and be able to repay the loans since it is a revolving fund.

"About 80 per cent of those borrowing money have invested in agricultural projects while others are in trade. The women are very much attracted to agricultural activities like farming and dairy farming due to quick returns," he said.

Wainaina was speaking in Nyeri town recently after issuing cheques valued at Ksh 10.8 million to over 200 women groups from Mukurweini, Mathira and Nyeri town constituencies.

Since inception in year 2008, a total of Ksh 2.7 billion has been loaned to thousands of women groups countrywide.

"The loans have helped to improve their incomes and also improve their families. We deal with organized women groups. Some groups have been borrowing even Ksh 50,000 and repaying back on time," he said.

The CEO said the Fund is target-

ing to give Ksh 1.1 billion loans to over 9,000 groups by the end of this financial year.

Wainaina added that the women have been trained on entrepreneurship in order to spend the money wisely and also to invest wisely.

He, however, lamented that some constituencies which have been affected by insecurity like Bura, Galole and Turkana among others have been defaulting the loans by 15 per cent and hopes the security will improve.

Meanwhile, taxpayers will now

be able to pay their taxes at the touch of a button. The Kenya Revenue Authority has introduced the Internet Tax Payment System (Itax) which seeks to ensure that all taxes are paid electronically.

Fanuel Koome, Business Project

Developer at the Kenya Revenue Authority says that all taxpayers are thus expected to have complied with the new mode of payment before the end of this financial year in June.

He says the newsystem is expected to benefit all tax payers and revolutionise tax collection process in the country through digital methods.

Through Itax, taxpayers will be able to make their returns online in the shortest time possible and reduce queuing at regional offices.

The new system is 'swift, simple and secure' and will deal with domestic taxes only. "It is well enabled to register taxpayers, file, pay and make status enquiries online with real time monitoring accounts," said Koome.

Itax will also get rid of past challenges faced by taxpayers especially in regard to compliance with tax regulations and facilitating them with convenient inquisition of their records.

According to the officer, the authority plans to launch other initiatives like mobile payments and internet banking. He said that so far only four banks have adopted the system but they are still recruiting more banks.

Koome, however urged tax payers to stop registering for pin numbers at cyber cafés as they only use one email address to register all clients which in most cases leads to confusion.

He revealed that KRA will licence intermediaries and tax agents like ICPAK and LSK to issue pin numbers to customers.



Some of the Nyeri women groups who received loans from Women Enterprise Funds from the funds CEO Samuel Wainaina. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

## Lawyers demand implementation of reports

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

LAWYERS now want reports on land implemented to help find a lasting solution to historical injustices.

They said that land issues were deep rooted and emotive and cannot be addressed in political rallies but in line with the Constitution.

Lawyer Paul Ndungu said that recommendations made by three Commissions' on Land were yet to be implemented. "Individuals named in illegal and irregular allocations of land are yet to be brought to book in line with the Constitution," Ndung'u said.

He said reports that would have assisted in resolving historical land injustices like the Njonjo Land Commission on Land Law System of Kenya are gathering dust.

"Recommendations made by the Parliamentary Committee on the Coastal Land Problems in 1976 are yet to see the light of day," Ndungu said. He said that majority of recommendations made by the Ndungu Land Commission, which he chaired recently have been swept under the carpet.

"The Commission of Inquiry into Illegal and Irregular Allocations of Public Land (Ndungu Commission) named culprits who remain owners," Ndungu said.

He was addressing over 250 lawyers during the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) Continuous Legal Education (CLE) Programme in Nyeri. Ndungu presented a legal research paper titled *Introduction, Historical Background & Constitutional Provisions*.

Lawyer Ambrose Rachier who was among drafters of the three

new land laws said that public and private land must be administered in line with the Constitution.

The recently passed Statutes are the National Land Commission Act, Land Act and the Land Registration Act. "Land must now be held, used, managed in a manner that is equitable, efficient, productive and sustainable," Rachier said. He added that there were 150 laws on land before the new land acts were passed last year in line with the Constitution promulgated three years ago.

Rachier was presenting a legal paper titled *Land Reforms in Kenya: An Analysis of Chapter Five of the Constitution, Land Acts 2012 & The National Land Commission*.

He said that the Land Act 2012 consolidated substantive colonial land laws and the Land Registration Act consolidated all transactions on land.

"The National Land Commission Act was to operationalise the National Land Commission in line with the Constitution" Rachier said.

He said that issues that required reform included land allocation, compulsory acquisition, land hoarding, absentee landlordism and sub division into uneconomic units.

"Public cemeteries, toilets, schools were irregularly allocated. Land hoarding is also an issue at the expense of economics," Rachier said. Rachier said that delays in service delivery, access to land, numerous legislations over land, historical injustices were other issues that required reform.

"Squatters, IDPs, protection of matrimonial property and community land must be addressed once and for all," Rachier said.

## Residents embrace electricity generation project

By BEKADZO TONDO

LEADERS in Kilifi County have welcomed a move to initiate coal fired electricity generation project at Zowerni in the area.

Assistant Minister Francis Baya says the project is good for the county as it will facilitate the production of electricity locally. He said the project will boost revenue generation for the county government.

Mr. Baya made the remarks at Mkwajuni ground in Kilifi County where he said that leaders in the area need to explore more development projects to spur growth in the county.

He said this will help create job opportunities for the local people and thus the need to fully support the initiative. "The coal fired electricity project to be done on about 300 acres of land at Zowerni is a noble project for the county and local leadership should support it fully," said Baya.

Last year, the ministry of energy was forced to suspend the implementation of the project after the local people rejected the project.

Trouble started when the local people argued that they were not ready to support the project as they were not involved in consultation meetings. The people further argued that the project was going to displace some people besides having negative implications to the lives of the local people, their livestock and interfering with the environment.

Most of the people accused the officers from the provincial administration of approving the project without involving the local leadership.

A senior geologist in the ministry of Energy Mr John Omonge later confirmed that failure to involve local people was an oversight which has since been addressed.

However Mr Omenga said the project was still at its feasibility study stage and that it was crucial to involve

the people fully.

He said families whose land will be used for the project will have to be compensated as per the market rates.

"It was very important to bring the local people on board when planning to start a project in an inhabited area as failure can derail its implementation," said Mr Omonge.

Minister Baya said the affected families have been identified and will be compensated once the project begins.

Baya said identification of the people earmarked for compensation will be done in a transparent manner.

"The coal fired electricity project is just an important project for the Kilifi County and people should not drag politics into the initiative," said Baya.

Meanwhile, the County Transition Authority (CTA) will take stern measures against individuals who fraudulently dispose off property belonging to the now moribund civic bodies.

The CTA mandate includes auditing of assets and debts of local authorities, tallying of staff of both central and local authorities, educating the public on county governments, preparing county profiles, classifying which town is a city and municipality and assist new county officials to draw budgets.

The Authority will also train county officials in their new duties, transfer functions originally done by national government authorities, review the performance of each county government and report its evaluation to the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution and that of Revenue Allocation.

The Authority shall, in every three months, submit a progress report to the President, Parliament, the Commission for Implementation of the Constitution and Commission on Revenue Allocation.

The progress report shall include status on transfer of functions to coun-

ty governments; any impediments to the transition programme; recommendation to address specific concerns identified by the Authority; and any other information of concern relating to the functions of the Authority.

The Authority shall publish its progress report in the Gazette and in such other accessible manner as it may determine.

For the period after the announcement of the results of the first elections as contemplated by Section 2 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, the Authority shall submit the progress report to Parliament and to the relevant County Assemblies and County Executives Committees.

A commissioner to the Authority Mr Bakari Omara says that measures have been put in place to curb any illegal sale of public property.

Speaking to stakeholders of Kilifi County at the Kilifi county council hall, Mr Omara said that the authority had compiled data on government properties including motor vehicles, buildings, land and other assets for protection.

"We are in the transition phase from the Central government to the county governments and as an authority in charge of the transitional process, we have put in place mechanisms to safeguard public assets from looters," said Mr Omara.

He said that smooth transition can only be realised if public assets are safeguarded. He challenged members of the public to be on the alert and report to the authority any cases of theft of government property.

"Members of the public have an obligation to ensure government assets and other properties are not looted," said Mr Omara.

The commissioner said the authority will decentralize its services at the county level to assist the governors and their teams to jumpstart their operations.



# Othaya Tea farmers record a boom in UK supermarkets

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

IRIA-INI Tea Factory in Othaya has so far sold about 2,000 kilogrammes of ready-made tea to UK supermarkets since last year.

The factory board chairman Hutchison Wanjohi said the farmers have earned Ksh 1.06 million after the factory partnered with Marks & Spencer supermarkets on a value addition pilot project. The project involves packaging their produce into tea bags at source for sale in their chain of stores in UK and a one kilogramme bag goes for Ksh 558.40.

Speaking during this year's Annual General meeting, the chairman said he hoped this will go a long way to boost the farmer's revenue in future

especially if more kilogrammes are sold in the market outlet.

"Tea production is however faced with challenges since our average production per bush was 1.2 Kgs which is below the target of 2.5 Kgs per bush. We urge all our growers to improve the general tea husbandry in order to improve production and quality," he added.

During the last financial year, a total of 12.6 million Kgs of green leaf were delivered for processing at the company's factory producing 2.9 million Kgs of made tea. This is higher compared to the previous year's level of 11.2 million Kgs of green leaf delivered.

Last year, the company was able to pay farmers Ksh 672.4 million for the

green leaf delivered. These payments were higher than the previous year's payment of Ksh 559.2 million.

Meanwhile, Gitugi Tea Factory in Othaya has embarked on a major exercise that seeks to modernize its plant to enhance production of high quality tea.

The factory board chairman Peter Mwangi said the factory has also embarked on a programme which will help in minimizing cost of production.

Some of the initiatives which are being undertaken include replacement of asbestos roofing in the main production building with Zs iron sheets in the main factory building and extension offices.

Speaking during this year's Annual General Meeting, the chairman said the factory has continued to re-

place old factory machines to ensure sustainability in production and quality tea.

"The factory embraced the Electronic Weighing Scales solution, which is a digital weighing online system that is a major improvement and a safeguard against leaf loss during weighing and collection," he said.

The chairman added that the factory also replaced the sisal bags with constant weight bags which will further enhance the measurement and delivery of green leaf.

"We also had the gravity water project which was implemented to help reduce on cost of pumping water to the factory," he added.

He also said the factory is involved in generation of Hydro power with other companies like Chinga, Iria-ini, Gathuthi and KTDA which will become an alternative source of energy as well as income.

Last year, crop production at the factory was higher than that of the previous year with 11.02 million Kilogrammes of green leaf being delivered for processing to the company than the previous year of 8.9 million Kgs.

The company was able to pay farmers Ksh 606.1 million for the green leaf delivered.

And, Gatunguru Tea Factory in Murang'a County has set aside Ksh.2.4 million to be paid out to farmers in dividends. The board of the factory unanimously endorsed the payments following the good performance of the company.

Speaking during the Annual General Meeting, the chairman of the

board Samuel Mugi said that this is the first and final dividend payment of 2.5 per cent to be paid as a final dividend to all 'Class B' shareholders.

This is equivalent to Ksh 0.125 (12.5 cents) per share.

"The tea business continues to be a promising venture and in order to sustain the good performance of the board, the management has put in place strategies to ensure the future is well secure for our shareholders," added the chairman.

Mugi said the factory plans to invest in Mini Hydro Power projects, wood fuel plantations and diversify their range of products as the key areas they are focusing on.

"Arising from escalating cost of inputs, the company continues with the automation of various processes to enhance capacity, improve on efficiency and mitigate against rising costs," he added.

Mugi said the factory has progressively automated their processing capacities and last year, they rolled out Electronic Weighing Solution in the leaf collection area which is expected to improve efficiency and reduce the leaf collection costs.

Last year, the crop production for the year increased by 9.09 per cent compared to the previous year.

Over 14.4 million Kgs of green leaf were delivered last year compared to 13.2 million Kgs delivered in year 2011. The company was able to make a payment to the farmers of Ksh 765.4 million for the green leaf delivered which was higher than Ksh 677.1 million paid in year 2011.



Workers at Ragati Tea Factory in Nyeri County offload green tea from a truck. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

## Tea production registers growth

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

TEA production in the country has recorded an increase of nine percent in the last five months. The Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) National Chairman Peter Kanyago attributed the increase to favourable climatic conditions resulting from good rains in the tea growing areas.

He said after the application of the fertilizers, the tea crop responded well due to good rains which led to increase in production of green tea. The chairman therefore said the farmers might earn more at the end of the financial year if the trend continues. Kanyago said the increase has been recorded in all the 65 factories countrywide.

He was speaking at Ragati Tea Factory in Nyeri County after he held a meeting with zone IV tea directors from all the five factories.

"However, there has been many challenges including the rising of production costs since the cost of electricity has gone high," he lamented. Kanyago added that the cost of farm inputs has also gone up which is a setback unto the sector.

"But the factory has trained farmers on the good agricultural practices. The farmers have also been urged to plant more trees in the tea bushes in order to curb natural calamities like frost which hit the country early this year. We want them to plant more trees to be able to cope with climate change," he added.

So far all the 65 factories have bought 600 acres each and planted their own indigenous trees with most of the factories achieving more than 20 per cent.

"All the factories in Meru County

have achieved 100 per cent tree planting in these acreages of lands. This is the way to move as the indigenous trees will help curb climate change," he added. He said the planting of trees will help to conserve environment and at the same time acquire fuel for tea processing. To curb the high cost of electricity, several factories have started their own hydro power project like the Gura Hydro Power project which will start soon.

"The Ksh 1.3 billion project involving five tea factories like Gathuthi, Iria-ini, Chinga and Gathuthi will produce five mega watts which will be used by the factories and then the balance will be sold to Kenya Power," the chairman said.

This will help farmers to save a lot and earn more money since about Ksh 9 is used to process one Kilogramme of green tea which is very much expensive. Meanwhile, Kieni farmers have benefited from a Ksh 2 million Information centre where farmers can get the latest farming and marketing information.

The Ksh.2 million information centre was put up with assistance from Help Self Help Centre (HSHC), a Non-Governmental Organisation from Scandinavian countries.

The centre based in Narumoru town is equipped with modern computers which are all connected to the internet where farmers can browse to get latest farming trends.

The centre also serves as a training ground for the farmers on basic computer, internet and mobile phones use.

The ultra-modern Information centre for use by local farmers was opened by Kieni East DO Deborah Mwarania who said the farmers will get the latest information on soil fertility, modern

farming techniques, climate change, pests and emerging crop diseases and how to control them. The DO challenged the farmers from the area and the larger Nyeri County to embrace use of modern farming technologies in order to boost food production and reap maximum benefits.

Mwarania noted that use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) was the only way to go as farmers could get updates on the latest farming trends and emerging markets for their produce.

"There is need for farmers to keep abreast to the latest advancements in farming so that they are able to make informed choices on what to produce after accessing possible incomes and costs involved," Mwarania said.

The DO observed that the centre was one of a kind in the country and challenged local farmers to make the best use of the facility as it would help them improve on their farming and marketing produce thus improving on their livelihoods.

The Project Manager Charles Kahunja said that the centre would be run by two ICT officers who assist the farmers in their queries and find solutions from the relevant sources and has capacity to serve 1,000 farmers.

"The centre is connected to an internet application by M-farm Company that gives updated prices of most farm commodities where farmers can get from the internet or via Short Messaging Service at a subsidized price of Ksh 1 from their mobile phones," said the manager.

He added, "This, ensures that farmers are kept abreast on the best prices for their produce through the updates from M-FARM."

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# Mangoes move Makueni to national fame

By MALACHI MOTANO

FARMERS in Makueni are adopting modern mango farming in agribusiness, a new venture that is shaping livelihoods in most families in the County.

The county has for the last three years reported massive planting of new mango trees attracting attention of agriculturists in the county.

According to a baseline survey of mango trees census report carried out in Eastern Province by Institution Development and Management, income from mango farming was contributing significantly a forty percent of farm household income in lower eastern region of eastern province.

The findings reported the entry of young generation into mango farming agribusiness out of their conscious realization of the economic benefits from the farm enterprise, which the survey says were behind massive planting of modern grafted mangoes in the recent years in the region.

“Out of 2,761,929 mango trees in Eastern province, 91 percent of the mango trees have been planted in the last seven years, by the current generation of farmers, who have easily adopted initiatives to improve mango farming,” the survey revealed.

Makueni county with a total of 1,469,625 mango trees from its 28,696 farmers, led in 2010 mango production in the Eastern province, generating Ksh 1,267,974, Machakos county followed with Ksh 300,268 from 506,544 mango trees scattered to its 17,676 farmers.

The survey finding picks Nzau District in Makueni County to be the best suitable area to set up a mango processing plant in the province due to large mango production, mango tree population and high number of mango farmers, unlike the other 42 districts covered by the survey.

It was notable from the survey that mango farming enterprise in terms of generating household income accounts for the annual gross domestic product value at Ksh 2.442 billion at farm level. The agriculturists put the mango sub sector at eastern province at 12 percent annually.

Statistics from the Ministry of agriculture has it that mango is the third

most important fruit in the country in terms of production after banana and pineapples. The survey revealed that although mango cultivation is taking a commercial dimension, it is cultivated in small scale with two third of farmers holding 20 mango trees or less.

The mango survey in the 42 mango growing districts points out that the eastern province has slightly 92,650 farmers with those practising commercial mango cultivation and holding above 50 mango trees are only 13 percent.

Having been introduced into the country at coast province in the 14 century from India and Pakistan during ivory and slave trades before it started spreading to the hinterlands, the mango sub sector have been growing very slowly.

However the survey reports a

changing trend in recent years that there has been expansion in mango cultivation especially in eastern province.

Coast province which was hitherto considered as the home of mango growing has been overtaken by eastern province. The survey rates the Coast province a distance second, with Eastern province been home of largest mango trees population in the country, which stands at three million mango trees planted at 42,000 hectare, while coast province has mango trees population of 1.4 million.

With substantial growth in mango sector in recent past years, farmers are focused on cultivation of improved commercial varieties referred as grafted mangoes, unlike indigenous ones. Apple mango is widely grown and common favourite to farmers in

eastern region due to its high market demand.

Other improved varieties and common within the region and notably Makueni County, are Tommy, Kent Ngowe, Peach, Van Dyke, Boribo and Batawi.

“The high production of Apple, Tommy, Kent and Ngowe mango varieties is good news for processors and fresh market players given their unique market characteristic,” the researchers add.

The survey predicts that in the next four years mango production in eastern province will almost double the current outputs. However the researchers regret that most of planting materials are sourced from farmers own farms and notably obtained from already grafted mango varieties.

The agriculturist underscores the

need to sensitize farmers on the need to obtain certificated cultivars from Kenya Agricultural Research Institutes (KARI) and other established nurseries.

“It is evident that access to quality planting materials is a major constraint and efforts must be made to ensure that quality planting materials are affordable and accessible to farmers, to enhance mango production and higher income,” recommends the report.

Other notable challenges include pests and diseases resulting to high cost on pesticides and other chemicals thus affecting mango productivity and quality of fruits respectively. Extended dry weather condition especially in Ukambani region threatens mango cultivation.

Farmers lose 30 percent in post harvest losses from poor fruit quality, uneconomical qualities among farmers for various varieties as well as low level of market organization.

Training of farmers on best agronomical practices need to be done as well link farmers to mango markets to revamp the sub sector given that the mango market are currently controlled by scrupulous middlemen.

As the country is geared to vision 2030, the survey advises for greater private participation especially in processing of mango products to enhance value addition. It further calls for engagement of Kenya Mango Producers and Marketing Association to play an active role in getting prospective investors in the mango sub sector in the eastern region.

Government through the ministry of agriculture and partners has several projects undertaken to boost mango production in the eastern region among them National Agricultural and Livestock Expansion Programme (NALEP) and the Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Agribusiness Project (KAPAP) where mango farmers have been assisted in cultivation of improved mangoes.

With the challenges that come with the marketing of mangoes and post harvest losses due to the mango fruit's perish-ability, partners and local leaders are looking for possibilities of establishing a fruit processing plant at the lower eastern province.



**Mango plantation. Makueni County has for the last three years reported massive planting of new mango trees attracting attention of agriculturists in the county. Photo/Malachi Motano**

## Sugar industry faces bleak future over wrangles

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

A PROVINCIAL administrator has decried the incessant wrangles among sugar firms in Western province over the now diminishing raw material.

The Western Provincial Commissioner Mr. James Ole Serian lamented that the wars pitting sugar factories were impacting negatively on the future of the sugar industry in the region.

Ole Serian who was speaking in Webuye town recently noted with disappointment that the sugar wars are disastrous to the sugar industry hence the residents' socio-economic development.

“I am indeed sad to note that the wars are increasingly becoming untenable. We must do something to reverse

the trend or else the sugar industry will suffer irreparable losses,” the pc said.

The PC consequently announced drastic measures which he said are aimed at thwarting sugar cane wars among sugar firms once and for all in the region.

He defended his move arguing that for sanity to be restored in the sugar industry there was serious need to regulate the activities and operations of the sugar firms.

In a bid to minimize the wars the provincial administrator announced three cardinal rules which he asserted should be adhered to by the sugar firms and other players in the industry.

First, the PC said that for the purposes of identity, all sugar factories shall be required to register all their

contracted farmers.

In addition, he said that no factory shall be allowed to encroach on the territory of another factory at will and without permission from the factory concerned.

Thirdly, the administrator said that all impounded cane shall be taken to the nearest police station where parties in dispute will be called to provide ownership proof documents.

Ole Serian added that the three rules will go a long way in streamlining the operations and activities of the sugar firms so as not to be at loggerheads over sugar cane.

The PC's directive comes in the wake of cane poaching by rival sugar firms due to shortages registered in the area.

Millers without sufficient supply of the raw material have in the recent past been poaching cane from other millers' in order to sustain their production.

But in a swift move, police have impounded several lorries and trucks that have been found transporting cane without clear documents and the cane on transit taken to the factory in the respective zone for crushing without even bothering to establish the owner of the commodity.

There are four sugar factories and three millers in Western province and all scramble for the little available cane.

Initially the millers had a lot of over-mature cane in both their nucleus estates and out growers zones for sus-

tainability of their operations.

There is now a looming cane crisis which if not arrested may lead to the collapse of sugar firms and consequently the industry.

Sugar cane being harvested now for crushing by virtually all sugar firms in the region is under-age, thus between 12 and 14 months.

Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) director Mr. Billy Wanjala attributes the shortage to reluctance by the factories to borrow loans meant to boost the crop from KSB due to cane poaching.

“No factory is willing to borrow cane development funds from the board because rival firms poach the crop at the expense of those who injected borrowed funds in them,” he says



# Ganze farmers demand compensation from KWS

By BEKADZO TONDO

FARMERS in Ganze have suffered high losses following the destruction of their crops by marauding elephants.

About 10 elephants have strayed into their farms in Migodomani and vitengeni areas and destroyed maize crops.

According to the vice chairman of Kilifi county council Mr. Teddy Mwambire, the animals have strayed from Tsavo West national park and invaded people's farms.

"The marauding elephants from Tsavo West national park have invaded farms in Migodomani and vitengeni and destroyed maturing maize crops," said Mr Mwambire.

Mwambire who is the councilor for Vitengeni ward said efforts to seek the assistance and compensation from the Kenya Wildlife Service have fell on deaf ears.

"Soon after the wild beasts were found destroying people's maize crops, we immediately informed KWS personnel but they have never responded," said Mr Mwambire.

The civic leader said people in Ganze who have been relying on relief food for many years due to a prolonged period of drought, were hoping to make a good harvest after the area received sufficient amount of rainfall but the invasion by the wild animals has shattered their hopes.

His Mitangani ward counterpart

councilor Daniel Mangi said the wild beasts have also been a great threat to the lives of the local residents.

Councilor Mangi whose ward borders Tsavo West National Park decried the rising cases of human wild life conflict in the area.

He said about three months ago stray elephants attacked and killed two women as they fetch water.

"Cases of human wildlife conflict in Mitangani location are very high and we want KWS to find lasting solutions to the problem so that people can live in peace" said Mr Mangi.

The civic leaders recommended that KWS puts up an electric fence around the national park to block the animals from straying into unrestricted zones.

ed zones.

"The KWS should install an electric fence within the area that borders the Tsavo West National Park to find a lasting solution to the menace," said Mr Mangi.

Ganze District Commissioner Mr. Ibrahim Diba had earlier blamed the lack of enough water sources inside the park for the sneaking of the wild beasts. Mr Diba said prolonged drought had made the water points in the national park to dry up and thus wild animals were straying in search of the commodity.

"The Wild animals stray because all the water sources in the park have dried up owing to the prolonged drought period," said Mr Diba.

## Busia cane farmers promised cheap loans

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Kenya Sugar Board through Agricultural Finance Cooperation (AFC) plans to disburse Ksh 1.3 billion to farmers in Busia County to boost cane production.

The programme funded by European Union (EU) takes effect immediately and is aimed at making cane farmers in the region self-reliant without relying on millers.

Addressing stakeholders during a field day at St Mary's primary school in Nambale recently, the AFC managing director Lucas Messo said over reliance on millers for the provision of farm inputs has left majority of farmers in the area reeling in abject poverty due to the losses.

He said the loan facility will help farmers reap highly from their produce and minimize losses incurred due to poor land preparation.

The Managing Director said the loans will be advanced at the rate of 5percent payable in five year-term, of three installments phases.

The installments, he added will account for 40percent of the first harvest, 30percent of the second harvest and 30 percent third harvest.

Messo, however, challenged farmers in the sugarcane-rich County to seize the opportunity to expand and modernize their farming techniques for maximum output.

He said that the programme has been aligned with vision 2030 and the Millennium Development Goal on food security.

Messo further said the loan will be awarded based on an individual farmer's need and the acreage under cane production with an acre attracting as much as Ksh 55,000.

The Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) Chief Executive Officer Ms Rosemary Mikok urged cane farmers in Busia to exploit the opportunity to help boost their cane production as currently local demand had outstripped supply.

The Sugar Board boss said that farmers, regulators and millers should unite for the success of cane farming in the larger Busia County.

She encouraged farmers to form groups to enable them qualify for loans disbursed to cane farmers.

"The Kenya Sugar Board is rolling out a plan to fund millers to support farmers who have no title needs but are supplying cane on contract basis," said the CEO.

At the same time, the Kenya Sugar Board boss said the board is developing a national cane policy to ensure farmers get access to the right quality of seed to increase on their yields.

Mkok however urged the sugarcane farmers to practice Agribusiness ventures.

The cane farmers expressed satisfaction saying the loan facility was long overdue and vowed to intensify their efforts to meet the local demand.

# Tea production registers a boost in the last five months

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

TEA production in the country has recorded an increase of nine percent in the last five months.

The Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) National Chairman Peter Kanyago attributed the increase to favourable climatic conditions resulting from good rains in the tea growing areas.

He said after the application of the fertilizers, the tea crop responded well due to good rains which led to increase in production of green tea.

The chairman therefore said the farmers might earn more at the end of the financial year if the trend continues. Kanyago said the increase has been recorded in all the 65 factories countrywide.

He was speaking at Ragati Tea Factory in Nyeri County after he held a meeting with zone IV tea directors from all the five factories.

"However, there has been many challenges including the rising of production costs since the cost of electricity has gone high," he lamented.

Kanyago added that the cost of farm inputs has also gone up which is a setback unto the sector.

"But the factory has trained farmers on the good agricultural practices. The farmers have also been urged to plant more trees in the tea bushes in order to curb natural calamities like frost which hit the country early this year. We want them to plant more trees to be able to cope with climate change," he added.

So far all the 65 factories have bought 600 acres each and planted their own indigenous trees with most of the factories achieving more than 20 per cent.

"All the factories in Meru County have achieved 100 per cent tree planting in these acreages of lands. This is the way to move as the indigenous trees will help curb climate change," he added.

He said the planting of trees will help to conserve environment and at the same time acquire fuel for tea processing.

To curb the high cost of electricity, several factories have started their own hydro power project like the Gura Hydro Power project which will start soon.

"The Ksh 1.3 billion project in-



A worker at Ragati Tea Factory in Nyeri County package tea for sale. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

volving five tea factories like Gathuthi, Iria-ini, Chinga and Gathuthi will produce five mega watts which will be used by the factories and then the balance will be sold to Kenya Power," the chairman said.

This will help farmers to save a lot and earn more money since about Ksh 9 is used to process one Kilogramme of green tea which is very much expensive.

Meanwhile, most women groups in the country have resorted to borrow loans from the Women Enterprise Funds to invest in agricultural projects.

The Women Enterprise Funds CEO Samuel Wainaina said most of the women have started agricultural projects as the main income generating activities followed by trade

projects.

He said the projects are helping the women earn good profits within a short period and be able to repay the loans since it is a revolving fund.

"About 80 per cent of those borrowing money have invested in agricultural projects while others are in trade. The women are very much attracted to agricultural activities like farming and dairy farming due to quick returns," he said.

Wainaina was speaking in Nyeri town recently after issuing cheques valued at Ksh 10.8 million to over 200 women groups from Mukurweini, Mathira and Nyeri town constituencies.

Since inception in year 2008, a total of Ksh 2.7 billion has been loaned to thousands of women groups coun-

trywide.

"The loans have helped to improve their incomes and also improve their families. We deal with organized women groups. Some groups have been borrowing even Ksh 50,000 and repaying back on time," he said.

The CEO said the Fund is targeting to give Ksh 1.1 billion loans to over 9,000 groups by the end of this financial year.

Wainaina added that the women have been trained on entrepreneurship in order to spend the money wisely and also to invest wisely.

He however lamented that some constituencies which have been affected by insecurity like Bura, Galole and Turkana among others have been defaulting the loans by 15 per cent and hopes the security will improve.



## Othaya coffee farmers settle for global market

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OTHAYA Coffee Farmers Cooperative Society has identified more than four foreign countries where they will be selling their coffee directly.

Speaking during this year's Annual General Meeting, the chairman Newton Ndiritu said the society with the assistance of Kenya Cooperative Coffee Exporters (KCCE) has identified several direct markets in United States of America, Switzerland, Korea and Norway.

The society started selling the coffee late last year at the mentioned countries and expected to get good returns.

The chairman said many other countries such as China, France and Germany have expressed interest to buy their coffee.

"The challenge is now unto us since we are facing low production and therefore I urge you farmers to work hard so that you may increase production and satisfy the growing demand for our coffee," The chairman told the farmers.

The coffee production for the last one year stood at 1.7 million Kilogrammes, which was a decline from the previous year, largely blamed on adverse weather conditions during the year.

He said that farmers had received an advance payment of Ksh 15 per Kg against their total production as at 12th January 2013.

"We are now using our coffee mill which has helped to reduce significantly production losses and

the coffee for 2012/2013 is being processed," said the chairman.

The society is also in the process of computerizing all its 19 coffee factories in Othaya by the end of the year 2013/2014.

"Once the computerization is completed, members would be served at their various factories instead of traveling long distances to

the headquarters at Othaya town," he added.

However, the society is faced with many challenges including coffee hawking and thefts.

He lamented that some members continue to hawk their coffee which is a great threat to the society.

"Hawking encourages theft of

coffee from the shambas. This is a trend that must be stopped under all costs since its illegal business. Members should decide on what action should be taken against the coffee hawkers and those who divert their coffee to other cooperative societies," he added.

The chairman urged the Government to help curb the menace.



Coffee farmers prepare parchment coffee in Othaya. The coffee will be sold directly in the foreign markets.  
Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

## KTDA starts a multi-million hydro power project

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

A MULTI-MILLION power project initiated by four tea factories and the Kenya Tea Development Agency has been started in Nyeri County.

The Ksh 1.3 billion Gura Hydro Power project which was commissioned recently is expected to generate five megawatts of electricity (green energy for the factories).

Four tea factories including Chinga, Gathuthi, Gitugi and Iria-ini and KTDA are involved in the project which is set to be completed by the year 2014.

KTDA chairman Peter Kanyago said the project will enable the factories diversify their revenue sources

since the factories require only 2.8 megawatts and the remaining 2.2 megawatts will be sold to Kenya Power. He added that hydro power development uses renewable energy (green energy) thus the projects have the potential to benefit from carbon credit revenue.

Nine other small hydro power projects countrywide are also in the pipeline as KTDA Power Company moves to mobilize resources to enable all the 65 tea factories diversify their business and generate additional revenue.

He said investments in the small hydro power plants is a strategy meant to mitigate the rising costs of production particularly in labour and electric-

ity which keep rising every year.

"The revenue generated will be shared between the tea factories and the Kenya Power Company who are the shareholders," he said.

The chairman who was accompanied by KTDA CEO Lerionka Tiampati said each of the KTDA factories spends between Ksh 35 and Ksh40 million annually on power costs, adding that energy (electrical and thermal) accounted for about 30 per cent of the operational costs for the tea factories with electricity alone accounting for 17 per cent.

Nationally, over Ksh 2billion is paid as electricity tariffs per year by the 65 tea factories.

"The cost of putting up a small

hydro power plant is high and the factories will need to apply for loans to raise the necessary capital in addition to equity contribution. Shareholders (farmers) of respective tea factories have shown their commitment to the projects by raising substantial amounts in equity, while KTDA holdings have guaranteed loans to construct power lines," the chairman added.

Tiampati said the construction work to be undertaken by officials' contractors VS Holdings of Sri Lanka is set to begin immediately after the ground breaking ceremony.

The excess power generated from the Gura Project would be sold to the national grid and the benefits would then be passed over to the small scale tea farmers through their factory companies.

The CEO said that KTDA was also exploring other sources of renewable energy like wind and solar power to supplement and augment its energy needs adding that the company has identified the Muchimikuru Wind project which had the potential to produce 24 megawatts of power.

Meanwhile, KTDA (Holdings) Ltd has set up the KTDA Power Company to manage and run hydro plants on behalf of the regional power companies. Through the management agreement KTDA Power Company has equity investment. Nine regional power companies have been formed covering all factories.

The regional power companies will own the Small Hydro Projects.

A farmer Joseph Ndiritu lauded the project saying the farmers will earn more money instead of relying on tea.



KTDA chairman Peter Kanyago (left) accompanied by an official of the KTDA tour the proposed site of the multi-million Gura hydro power project which will be started along Gura River at the border of Tetu and Othaya constituencies.  
Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

## Rice farmers irked by embezzlement of funds

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

RICE farmers in Western Kenya have protested against the alleged mismanagement of millions of shillings belonging to their Cooperative Society.

The irate farmers allied to the Bunyala Irrigation Scheme in Busia County accuse the management of defrauding the society of a total of Ksh. 7.5 million during the 2010/2011 financial year.

The money is part of Ksh. 42 million disbursed to the society through the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to support rice farming in the region after floods caused unprecedented havoc in Budalangi leaving farmers in debts which were later waived by the government.

Speaking to *The Link* at the Bunyala Irrigation Scheme offices recently, the irate farmers accused Magombe Multipurpose Cooperative Society top leadership of defrauding them.

Reliable sources within the Irrigation Scheme indicate that the society received a total of Ksh36.6million through the Economic Stimulus Programme to facilitate the purchase of farm input and another Ksh 5.4 Million from Food and Agricultural Organization.

The irate farmers said that about Ksh 12 million had been set aside to aid in the purchase of farm inputs but only Ksh 4 Million and the remaining Ksh 8million cannot be accounted for.

The farmers at the same time revealed that the out-grower expansion programme that received Ksh. 30 Million is experiencing challenges due to lack of funds to pay labour

"The cooperative society owes two contractors a total of Ksh 0.7million since the last crop season," said the rice farmers.

"We want Magombe Multipurpose Cooperative Society disbanded forthwith and stern legal action taken against the officials who have embezzled our funds," said one of the farmers who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The alleged corruption at the farmers' rice scheme has prompted the National Irrigation Board to dispatch a team of investigators to establish the truth of the matter and take the necessary action against those involved.

However, when contacted for comment over the alleged corruption, the Cooperative chairman Christopher Gunyi said the cooperative society was facing serious financial problems but the scheme was running smoothly.

The Chairman urged farmers to direct their focus on profitable strategies to enrich their farming through value addition during this 21st century.



# Managerial skills critical in health sector

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

FOR a long time, the Kenyan health sector has been grappling with gaps in leadership, management and governance. The situation has been aggravated by poor service delivery that has in past characterized most health facilities.

However, the scenario is likely to change as the health practitioners can now enhance their managerial skills at Kenya Institute of Health System and Management (KIHSM) in Nairobi. The institution would enable the health-experts gain the necessary leadership and management skills as they work alongside the government.

The training is seen as a major boost to the sector as it will create room for promotions and better pay. Doctors and nurses have always opted to either work in private hospitals or seek employment in foreign countries for better payments. In fact, it is said Kenya has the best trained doctors in the continent but majority practice in foreign countries.

Mark Bor, the Kenya's Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation said human capacity building is critical to motivate health-workers. "Many health facilities have been shut down due to poor managerial skills and bad governance. Dispensaries serving patients at the village level are the most affected," Mark Bor explained.

The PS disclosed that the two Ministries of Health in conjunction with other partners have agreed to spearhead efforts towards reviving the facilities. He stated it would help revamp already dilapidated health facilities in the country and prevent the

shutting down of others.

"As you may be aware, the mission of the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation is to; provide effective leadership and participate in provision of quality Public Health and Sanitation services. These are; Equitable, responsive, accessible and accountable to Kenyans," explained the PS.

"For the Ministry of Medical Services; it is much the same; to promote and participate in the provision of high quality curative and rehabilitative

medical services to all Kenyans," added the PS. He further emphasized on the need for the health workers to embrace the principles of effectiveness, quality, responsiveness and accessible health services. "Management is key to effective service delivery in any institution. Poor management was to blame for the frequent strikes in the hospitals that leave patients suffering," the Minister reiterated.

Many health facilities have been shut down mainly due to mismanage-

ment. With the devolution in place, every county will be expected to manage their own facilities with very little help from national government.

Mary Ngari the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Medical Services, stated that a report on Management and Leadership Development Gaps for Kenya Health Managers carried out between 2007 and 2008, revealed that the health sector dominated the government's recurrent budget, with 18 per cent of entire re-

current expenditure being channelled towards referral hospitals.

Ngari further pointed out health systems generally remain weak coupled with operational and management inefficiency, poor quality of service and poor capacity planning budgeting and management.

The PS said Kenya Institute of Health Systems and Management (KIHSM) have been established to offer the LMG skills to all health workers with regular refresher courses at least after every two years. She made the remarks as at close of the four days conference where she emphasized on the need to double up proper management at all levels.

Dr Shahnaz Shariff, the Director of Public Health said, Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), the biggest referral health facility in East and Central Africa, is the only hospital headed by qualified Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as its manager.

Dr Shariff applauded the manager for good management leading to improved health services to patients and better equipment for the facility.

"Before then KNH used to be an unimaginable place to be admitted for any treatment due to the bad smell, few beds in wards and demotivated health workers. But today things have changed hence importance of having qualified and experienced managers leading such big institutions," Dr Shariff reflected.

"Let me say here that in any service delivery, the best part of it comes from software not hardware. So, with all good physical structures in place and no human resource and government support, nothing much can be achieved," Dr Shariff observed.



Ministry of Public and sanitation and World Health Organizations representatives and motor bike riders demonstrate safety helmet safety wearing. Photo/Henry Owino

# Kieni farmer's set to benefit from centre

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

KIENI farmers have benefited from a Ksh 2 million Information centre where farmers can get the latest farming and marketing information. The Ksh 2 million information centre was put up with assistance from Help Self Help Centre (HSHC), a Non -Governmental Organisation from Scandinavian countries.

The centre based in Narumoru town is equipped with modern computers which are all connected to the internet where farmers can browse to get latest farming trends.

The centre also serves as a training ground for the farmers on basic computer, internet and mobile phones use.

The ultra modern Information centre for use by local farmers was opened by Kieni East DO Deborah Mwarania who said the farmers will get the latest information on soil fertility, modern farming techniques, climate change, pests and emerging crop diseases and how to control them.

The DO challenged the farmers from the area and the larger Nyeri County to embrace use of modern farming technologies in order to boost food production and reap maximum benefits.

Mwarania noted that use of Information Communication Tech-

nology (ICT) was the only way to go as farmers could get updates on the latest farming trends and emerging markets for their produce.

"There is need for farmers to keep abreast to the latest advancements in farming so that they are able to make informed choices on what to produce after accessing possible incomes and costs involved," Mwarania said.

The DO observed that the centre was one of a kind in the country and challenged local farmers to make the best use of the facility as it would help them improve on their farming and marketing produce thus improving on their livelihoods. The Project Manager Charles Kahunja said that the centre would be run by two ICT officers who assist the farmers in their queries and find solutions from the relevant sources and has capacity to serve 1, 000 farmers.

"The centre is connected to an internet application by M-farm Company that gives updated prices of most farm commodities where farmers can get from the internet or via Short Messaging Service at a subsidized price of Ksh 1 from their mobile phones," said the manager.

He added, "This, ensures that farmers are kept abreast on the best prices for their produce through the

updates from M-FARM,"

The project manager added that the centre not only serves as an information sharing platform for farmers but also provides up to date information on crop diseases

surveillance and forest destruction.

He however observed illiteracy and low levels of education amongst local farmers were major challenges of the project but were

quick to add that those who could not get the concepts of the project were advised to seek assistance of fellow farmers or from learned relatives on the information they needed.

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# Businesses in Tana River perform dismally

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE business community in Tana River County has blamed insecurity to the stagnation in growth in the recent past.

The traders said since March last year, security in the area has deteriorated to alarming levels and cited the bloody clashes which left more than 150 people dead.

Led by Mr. Gilo Shungi, a businessman at Oda village, they have been forced to close down their businesses for fear of attacks by thugs.

"Business people in Tana Delta

district have really incurred huge losses since the beginning of this year due to lack of security," said Mr Shungi.

The traders who spoke at Tarasa trading center complained that the clashes pitting the Orma and Pokomo communities had worsened the security situation in the area.

"Since March when clashes started erupting among the Ormas and the Pokomos, our business has been affected to the extent that some of us are closing down," said Mr Shungi.

He said that most bodaboda operators have fled the area due to in-

security and so has residents who have sought refuge in neighbouring areas.

The traders further said that the mass exodus of people from the area has virtually rendered them jobless.

A spot check at Tarasa, Ngao and Oda trading centers in Garsen established that people had fled from the area and were crowding at Tarasa trading center.

Mary Okwiri who was among the people fleeing said she was forced to abandon her home at Tarasa to join her husband at Mpeketoni.

"My home is at Tarasa but I

have decided to flee with my three children to Mpeketoni where my husband works," said Ms Okwiri.

However Tana River county commissioner Mr. Joseph Rotich urged area residents not to flee their homes as the government had deployed enough security officers.

Mr Rotich confirmed that there had been mass exodus of people mostly from Kipao, Ngoa, Oda, Tararasa and other villages in Garsen but said the residents were just doing so out of panic and fear.

"The government has deployed enough security officers who have

established camps at different joints while others are on patrol and therefore there should be no panic," said Mr Rotich.

The commissioner said they have been meeting as security agencies in the area to hold peace meetings with the people so that people could co-exist as one.

"The most important thing at the moment is to build peace among the Orma, Wardei and the Pokomos so that they can live in harmony as that was the only solution to address the crisis facing the county," said Rotich.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE drastic cuts on AIDS funding by donors could lead to new infections in the next two decades and reverse the gains made in the fight against the pandemic.

A debate held at a Nyeri hotel recently showed that if the funding is not increased, the number of new infections and AIDS related deaths could be substantially higher in the next 20 years which is more alarming.

An estimated 1.6 million Kenyans were living with HIV in year 2011 with approximately 6.2 per cent of the adult population being HIV/infected.

According to Lucy Kangara of Dedan Kimathi University, Community Outreach and Linkages department, more people continue to be infected with more than 91,000 adults becoming infected in year 2011.

"Stagnating funds or backtracking by international donors of HIV/Aids treatment risks undermining years of positive achievements and will cause many unnecessary deaths," she says.

About 80,000 deaths are reported every year in the country due to the disease.

She notes that if the funds are reduced, there will be impact on other sectors like Agriculture, industry, public service, education

## Fear as cuts on AIDS funding take toll



Some of the participants who attended a debate at a Nyeri hotel

Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

and informal sector due to lack of labour adding that it would cause a serious damage to the agriculture sector in those coun-

tries that rely on manpower for production.

Donor countries that have cut funding include Portugal, Greece

and Spain among others.

The stakeholders including the government have been urged to continue lobbying for more

funding since the disease was declared a national disaster in 1990.

Shamton Waruru from Partners Link which is an NGO says that the Ksh 85 billion set aside in the health sector last year by the Government is still not enough despite the 74 per cent of the budget going to the HIV/Aids.

"But I urge donors not to impose prohibitive conditions on the funding including on issues that touch on homosexuality which remains unacceptable in our culture," he added.

Christine Njogu, Central National Aids Control Council coordinator said to eliminate stigma, the donors and the government must continue investing in the disease both at the grass-root and national level.

"We must lobby the Government to take this as a priority and invest in it. Our prevalence rate is still high as by year 2009," she added. Njogu said they will continue working with stakeholders and other NGOs.

The debate was attended by community based organization members, stakeholders and several NGOs from the five counties of Central region.

## Media targeted for more attacks last year

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

LAST year has been described as one of the bloodiest years for journalists and media workers in the world.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) President Jim Boumelha disclosed that the year recorded 121 killings in targeted attacks and cross fire incidents.

Boumelha further disclosed that thirty more journalists died in accidents or of illness while they were at work thus bringing the total number of deaths to 151.

He said that this terrible number of deaths of members of the Fourth Estate is as a result of a systematic failure by Governments and the United Nations (UN) to fulfil their international obligations to protect and enforce journalists basic right to life.

"The death toll for 2012 is another indictment of Governments which pay lip service to the protection of

journalists," Boumelha said.

He claimed that the high numbers of journalists killed has become a constant feature in the last decade during which the usual reaction from Governments and the UN has been a few words of condemnation, a cursory of inquiry and a shrug of indifference.

According to the figures released by the IFJ, the deadliest region in 2012 was the Middle East and the Arab World where 47 journalists and media personnel were killed.

Syria tops the IFJ's list of the most dangerous countries with 35 deaths while Philippines and Iraq trail at the rear with 5 deaths each.

More violence and lawlessness in Somalia turned the country into a media killing field where 18 journalists were killed during the year under review.

Mexico and Pakistan each had 10 deaths of journalists due to organ-

ized crime and insurgents in these countries respectively. According to the IFJ, majority of these journalists were deliberately targeted because of their work and with the clear intention to silence them.

The IFJ urged accountability for violence targeting media at the recent UN Inter-Agency's conference in Vienna, Austria. During the conference the UN Action Plan on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity was officially launched.

This report, however, brings into sharp focus the need for genuine measures to protect journalists and punish those responsible for violence against the media.

"We now look at the UN plan on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity to deliver on its mandate. The situation is so desperate that inaction no longer represents an option," Beth Costa, IFJ General Secretary concluded.

## Farmers in Kilifi County advised to exploit the rainy season

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE government has urged farmers in Kilifi County to prepare their farms early for planting as the rainy season is set to begin.

Kilifi county commissioner Mr. Erastus Ekidor said locals should stop relying on relief food and instead embrace modern techniques of farming to help alleviate hunger.

Speaking in Kilifi, Mr Ekidor noted with great concern that most farmers in the area had not prepared their farms although the rains are about to start. The commissioner urged agricultural officers to mobilize farmers and educate them on the importance of adopting modern farming techniques to enable them produce more food for domestic use and for sale.

"Agricultural officers have a duty to educate farmers on the importance

of adopting modern farming methods so that they can be able to produce more food," said Mr. Ekidor.

He said Kilifi county which hosts the poorest Ganze constituency in the country must explore ways to improve on agricultural production.

"Kilifi county is endowed with enormous resources including River Sabaki which can be tapped for irrigation to boost on agriculture output," said Mr. Ekidor.

Kilifi District Agricultural Officer Mrs Jane Kanamu said there was need for farmers in the area to put more efforts in farming activities

The officer lamented that most farmers in district especially in Chonyi registered poor harvest due to the prolonged period of drought. She said the area registered total crop failure as the crops weathered before maturity due to the erratic rains.



By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI County has a new private university.

Fairland University Brade Gate Campus from Uganda will now operate in Kenya after a ground breaking ceremony officiated by Central PC KiplimoRugut at Chaka in Kieni East district.

The university when complete is expected to accommodate at least 10,000 students beginning mid this year (June) which will be the first intake.

The campus will offer degrees in agriculture, education, accounting, business administration with a bias in Agriculture among others.

Fairland Chancellor Prof. Dr.Ranju Chandrasekhar said the project will culminate in the setting up of a fully fledged campus of Fairland University in Nyeri on premises to be availed by the multi-million project of Brade Gate Industries.

Rugut urged locals to take advantage of such institutions in order to acquire more knowledge.

"Such kinds of developments are reasonably essential for our nation and the neighbouring state. I encourage others who fill they are capable to contemplate on making such strides for the purposes of overall growth of our country." The PC said.

It will in the beginning offer courses in agriculture with a bias in poultry farming, Education, accounting and Business Administration. This campus comes barely a month after Kimathi University College still in Nyeri received a charter from President MwaiKibaki to become a fully fledgeduniversity.

According to the PC, plans are underway to grant Karatina University College a charter which is also in Nyeri County in the next few months to increase institutions of higher learning in the expansive county.

Executive chairman of Brade Gate Poultry Industries ThuoMathenge where the university is located said the university will solve the social-economic quagmire bedevilling the country through; creating awareness, knowledge endowment, offering employment and eventually poverty eradication through exploitation of the available rich agricultural resources.

"The end result will be to curb rural-urban migration common all over

# Fairland University launched in Nyeri

Africa. The university allocated along Kiganjo – Nanyuki highway will also accommodate the larger East African community as it expands its wings," he added.

Mathenge was honoured with the Doctor of Social Sciences degree (HonorisCausa) by the vice chancellor during the function.

Brade Gate Poultry industries which houses the campus is the biggest and the most Ultra-modern poultry industry in

East and Central Africa.

It is a community based project working on eradication of Poverty from the community with over 100,000 people depending on the Poultry Industry.

"Poverty has been imminent but now changes are being felt in the community with over 2,000 local employed directly by Bradegate industries and over 50,000 employed indirectly," said the chairman.

Mathenge who is also the Nyeri as-

piring governor added that a thorough research and evaluation on the socio-economic wants of the local Nyeri community and its surroundings identified that Agriculture, like any other industry can change the economic status of the Nyeri County if given the right impetus.

Others who were present include senior officials of the university including Deputy Vice Chancellor Dr.Sandeep Gandhi and Vice Chancellor Dr. Solomon Wakabi.



**Executive chairman of Brade Gate Poultry Industries ThuoMathenge (centre) is honoured the Doctor of Social Science's degree by FairlandDeputy Vice Chancellor Dr.Sandeep Gandhi. Looking behind is Starehe Parliamentary aspirant Francis Mwangi..** Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

## Disabled lobby for special ministry

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

PEOPLE with disability now want the Government to create a special ministry for them at both the National Government and County Government. They claim that their plight has for long not been effectively addressed by the authorities due to lack of defined policies.

Bumula District chair of people with disability Mr. Adriano Sakwa blames the persistent suffering of disabled persons on the Government's failure to create a ministry solely for the constituency.

Sakwa says that creation of a ministry for disabled persons at both the National and County governments will lead to clear policies and adequate budgetary allocation for the group. The ministry, Sakwa adds will help to streamline the activities and programmes for the disabled persons particularly at the grass root level.

He, however, suggests that the ministry should be headed by people with disability at both Governments in order for the group to feel a sense of belonging.

"We have for long been exploited by our leaders who are themselves not disabled," he alleges.

Sakwa laments that donor funds meant for the disabled persons have for many years been diverted to other issues by Government officials because the disabled community is not represented by one of their own in the relevant department.

The scenario, Sakwa adds that has made disabled persons in the country not to access donor funds and other Government charities planned by the donors.

Sakwa reiterates that for the disabled persons not to continue being exploited by Government officials there is need to have disabled persons to run and manage their own ministry.

"The disabled account for over 4 million people in the country and we are now demanding that our own people should be appointed to head the ministry that concerns our affairs," Sakwa says.

Sakwa asserts that people who use the disabled persons to access donor funds for their own interest should not be allowed to advance the trade in the new political dispensation.

Consequently Sakwa urges members of the disabled community to vote for people who can articulate and address their plight.

"We have for long been neglected by elected leaders and let us this time vote for people who can address our needs," he says.

Sakwa appeals to the disabled community across the country to unite and speak in one voice so as to be heard by the authorities.

According to the constitution (Article 54 (b)) a person with disability is entitled to access educational institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities that are integrated into society to the extent compatible with the interests of the person.

And Article 54 (2) states that the State shall ensure the progressive implementation of the principle that at least five (5) percent of the members of the public in elective and appointive bodies are persons with disability.

## Funyula benefits from ultra-modern cultural centre

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE government has earmarked a total of Ksh100 million towards the construction of a cultural centre at Bumbe.

Funyula Member of Parliament Dr Paul Otuoma who is also the minister for Local Government says that once completed, the new cultural centre will help in storing of artefacts in the district adding that the centre will be part of the Western circuit tourism.

Otuoma who was addressing residents during the Samia United Cultural festival in Sio Port, said that the government had already disbursed a total of Ksh40million towards the cultural project. "The cultural centre once completed will spur the East African Integration process and also promote tourism," Otuoma told participants drawn from Kenya and Uganda who had attended the occasion. The legislator expressed concern saying that the two countries are still divided by an imaginary border, even though they are one people.

Samia Bugwe South Member of Parliament in Uganda, Julius Maganda who also addressed the occasion on his part said that Samia elders are playing a crucial role in the promotion of peaceful co-existence among the cross-border community.

The legislator at the same time said that the community boasts of 380,000

people in Uganda and 150,000 in Kenya adding that other members are found in Katonga, Zambia and Kagera in Tanzania. He said that talk is rife between the Government of Uganda and Samia community to be given the go-ahead to have and manage their own Kingdom.

Maganda expressed confidence saying that President Yoweri will approve their request to have autonomy of the Kingdom. "We have had no King for nearly six decades since Nabongo Omumia of Wanga's reign came to an end," he said. The legislator said that there was urgent need on the part of the two governments to train fishermen from the community and to open up the roads connecting the two border towns in order to boost trade.

Amagoro Member of Parliament Sospeter Ojaamong who is also labour assistant minister on his part praised Samia community for their strong cultural ties and appealed to other cross border communities to emulate them.

Ojaamong said that Busia County is set to benefit a lot under the new system of government taking into account the fact that it has a lot of resources which if properly utilized would go a long way in improving the economic status of the region hence empowering the people.

"Busia County has an edge over other counties because it has a lot of resources which if properly used will em-

power the people economically hence reducing the current high level of poverty," said Ojaamong.

Meanwhile, the government through the Busia Youth Enterprise Development Fund has disbursed a total of Ksh0.7million to seven youth groups and eleven individuals to enable them initiate various income generating activities and become self-reliant.

Addressing the beneficiaries after presenting them with the cheques at the District Information and Documentation Centre's boardroom at the Busia District headquarters recently, Nambale District Youth Development Officer Bernard Makeni urged the beneficiaries to take advantage of the loan facilities and initiate viable income generating activities that will sustain them.

"Utilize the loan you have been given properly and ensure you have invested the same in viable income generating activities that will at the end of the day earn you a lot of income so that you can become self-reliant considering the high level of unemployment in the county especially among the youth," said the district youth development officer.

The youth development officer urged the youth groups and those who had received individual loans to ensure they repay the loans in good time so that other groups in the waiting list can as well benefit from the loan and improve

on their standards of living.

"I am appealing to you to repay the loan in good time considering that we have a long list of other groups waiting to be funded so that they can also benefit from the same," said the youth officer, adding that majority of youth groups that had earlier received the loan had declined to repay claiming it was campaign money. "This is not a grant. It is not campaign money either as majority of you had thought. It is a loan that you must repay so that others can also be funded to enable them engage in income generating activities," added the youth development officer.

The seven youth groups received total of Ksh350,000 with each of them receiving Ksh50,000 of which a total of Ksh22,500 was deducted to cater for the management fee whereas the eleven individuals received a total of Ksh322,000 minus Ksh28,000 management fees.

The group members interviewed lauded the government for coming up with the initiative saying it has empowered them economically.

"I invested the first loan I took in poultry business which has really sustained me and my family. I completed repaying the loan and I have again received an individual loan which I will inject into the same business," said Wilbroda Night Adongo, one of the beneficiaries.



# Musicians protest over royalties

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 400 musicians from the Mt Kenya region have protested against what they termed as failure by the Music Copyright Society of Kenya (MCSK) to pay their royalties.

The irked musicians who had converged at Nyeri Catholic Cathedral hall said that the society had short changed them and failed to comply with set agreements.

The musicians walked out of the meeting organized by the society in Nyeri claiming that they were not being paid the allowances which were supposed to be accorded to them.

They said they had only received Ksh 1,000 allowance which they said was in contravention of a prior agreement of Ksh 2,000 during a regional meeting and Ksh 5,000 during an annual general meeting.

A gospel musician Beth Maina said the musicians are suffering in the hands of the society.

"We been recording our music at a very high cost but the MCSK has failed to meet part of its bargain by paying us," said Maina.

Maina also said that they have been paid their dues for the last four years.

"MCSK has been collecting money from the vehicles and different hotels and pubs that play our music but they have not been paying us our entitled royalties. We cannot be working for nothing," she lamented.

Another musician Peter Kimunyu said they would want a fellow musician to be in the society who will understand the problems they go through.

He said the society which is supposed to be helping the musicians was not doing so.

But MCSK chairman Michael Maganzo said that the royalties are paid as per musicians air play adding that most of the musicians complain-

ing do not have their music played most.

"We pay the royalties according to the air play the songs get. If your song is not played then we also do not collect money from your song and we cannot pay you," he said.

Maganzo also said the meeting organized in Nyeri was not a regional meeting.

He added that they had organized the seminar so as to give the musicians on how to make their music get air time.



Mt. Kenya region musicians protest outside Nyeri Catholic Cathedral hall in Nyeri town. They accuse the Music Copyright Society of Kenya of failing to pay their royalties. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

## Coast province in dire need of piped water

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

COAST region continue to experience acute water shortages with an estimated 2 million people having no access to piped water in their residential areas.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Water and Irrigation Engineer David Stower said the government through the Coast Services Water Board has been able to supply water to about 35 percent of the population which has a population of 3.3 million people as per the 2009 census.

"The government has been able to supply water to about 35 percent of the total population in Coast region which has an estimated population of about 3.3 Million people as per the 2009 census and this poses grave challenge," said Eng. Stower

Engineer Stower said there is need for the government and the Coast Water Services Board to look for donor funding and explore other potential water sources to improve supply.

He said the current water supply from the Mzima pipeline and the Baricho water pumping station at Langobaya in Malindi cannot adequately meet local demand including a host of hotels and industries.

"Coast province is one of the fast growing areas in terms of industries, hotel establishments and the general growth of the population and unless there are measures to increase water supply, residents will continue to ex-

perience acute shortages," said Engineer Stower

The PS made the remarks at the Coast main water works station at Baricho in Malindi District where he commissioned major rehabilitation works of the water pumping site.

He said the rehabilitation works which lasted for about two and a half years started in July 2010 with a funding of about Ksh 1 million from the French Development Agency (AFD) and has helped to improve the water supply by 30 percent.

The Engineer said the project has helped increase production capacity to 88 million liters of water per day up from the about 58 million liters of water supply before the rehabilitation works.

The PS who was accompanied by the chairman of Coast Water Services Board Mr Anthony Mrima said the rehabilitation works included supply and installation of high lift pumps, construction of a new chlorination mixing and dosing house, supply and installation of borehole pumping sets.

The rehabilitation process also included replacement of transformers, switch gears, installation of serge valves and new control panels among others. Engineer Stower said though the water supply had tremendously increased, payment of power bills remains a big challenge.

He said residents have to contend with frequent disruption in supply due to disconnection of power for failing to pay power bills.

"The big challenge in managing water services in this country has been the payment of power bills and I urge the chief executive officers of water boards in the country to clear outstanding bills to avoid disruption in supply," said engineer Stower.

He further noted that there was a lot of wastage through leakages and vandalism of water systems which has made the water services boards to incur heavy losses

Engineer Stower noted that currently the coast region was losing about 45 percent of water through leakages and vandalism which has to be controlled.

"The wastage through leakages and vandalism of water systems accounts for 45 percent and the need to find solutions to address the problem," said engineer Stower.

The coast water service board

chairman Mr Mrima thanked the French development agency for funding the rehabilitation works at the Baricho water works.

Mr Mrima said it was the duty and commitment of CWSB to ensure all Kenyans in the region get enough supply of clean water in their residing areas and urged the government and other development partners to assist the board meet its target.

However he said the big challenge his board was facing was the billing and payment of the power bills to the Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

"Though we are striving to improve our water infrastructure systems, payments of water bills remains a big challenge as we are paying an average of Ksh 35 million in a month and I urge the government to intervene," said Mrima.



Eng. David Stower, PS Ministry of Water and Irrigation.

## Columbia University opens first Center for Africa in Nairobi

By HENRY OWINO

COLUMBIA University network of global centers has opened its doors in Nairobi, Kenya as the first institution of its kind in Africa. The Columbia Global Centers- Africa represents an important milestone in the history of Columbia, for it signals a greater level of engagement between the University and the region.

Prof. Kenneth Prewitt, Vice President for Global Centers, guest speaker at the event said Columbia University's decision to establish the center for Africa is part of a far sighted strategy to expand its global impact. He added that the university would create an academic environment informed by perspectives from around the world.

Prof Prewitt revealed that the Global Centers network has been an integral part of the process, by developing regional hubs for Columbia's research, policy and academic work abroad. He stated that Nairobi centrally located in the region and thus other countries stand to benefit from its academic disciplines.

"The big ambition is to create an intellectual, academic and scholarly community which is globally integrated, and address simultaneously the huge challenges that globalization itself has brought," explained Prof Kenneth Prewitt, Vice President for Columbia Global Centers.

Dr Belay Begashaw, Director of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Centre for East and Southern Africa, assumes the directorship of both institutions.

Dr Begashaw disclosed that in several years of impactful engagement with Africa, in recognition of the continent's role in world affairs, Columbia's decision to initiate the Center has been highly welcomed by African states in general and by the host government, the Government of Kenya, in particular.

To maximize the contribution of its activities, Dr Begashaw said the new institute will engage African leaders from the outset. In the spirit of collaboration, he pointed out that the highlight of past events was a discussion between Columbia University representatives, and leaders from Kenya's business, political and academic landscape.

Attention focused on defining Columbia's role in Africa, and potential areas of collaboration, such as the issue of intellectual property rights for African states.

To help create and ensure the new institution achieves its goal and prosper academically, Prof Prewitt was joined on a panel discussion by Dr Safwan Masri, Director, Columbia Global Centers Middle East, and the Hon Farah Maalim, Deputy Speaker of the Tenth National Assembly of Kenya, alongside Dr Belay Begashaw who moderated the discussion.

Others who engaged with the guests included; Mr Mugo Kibati, Director General of the Kenya Vision 2030 implementation board, former Attorney General Mr Amos Wako, Maureen Syowai from Columbia's International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs (ICAP), Prof. Karanja Njoroge, Acting Executive Director at the Green Belt Movement and Prof Debra Wogemeth, from Columbia University.



# Significance of fallen Mugumo tree

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE falling of the Mugumo tree in Tetu district, Nyeri County recently is a sign of good things to come in the country.

The Gikuyu and Mumbi Cultural Centre Director General Samuel Kamitha at the same predicted that there will be no violence after the March 4 general elections and so Kenyans should not worry.

Speaking after he assessed the 300-year-old Mugumo tree in Tetu district, Kamitha who was accompanied by several Gikuyu elders said anytime the tree fell was an indication that God had heard prayers by the Kenyan people.

The team said they will return at the home of Gichukiirungu later after the general elections and cleanse the area before the tree is used as firewood.

The elders will return and conduct some sacrifices, which will culminate in the planting of another Mugumo tree at the site after the general elections.

"This ceremony will make the scene a heritage site for Kikuyu community. This is an important tree in the community. The fall is a sign of good things to come in the Kikuyu community and Kenyans in general. But I insist that the 'good things' were based on the coming general elections," said Kamitha.

The leaders also resolved that a group of elders, who in November last year held a Kikuyu traditional ceremony at Uhuru Park- where they broke seven gourds-, would retreat to Mt Kenya soon for prayers, after which they will troop to the scene to conduct traditional ceremonies.

Kamitha, who was accompanied by MzeeMathenge Walregi said the ceremony at Uhuru Park was a prayer to God to help find a solution to the pending cases in The Hague, which involve four Kenyans, among them Jubilee presidential candidate and his running mate, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto.

"Any court case involves the court, prosecution and the accused,

but these cases at the ICC have now been engulfed in politics, diplomatic relationships and national leadership. But after the traditional ceremony, we have seen some developments, which touch on witnesses and even other big things to come. The falling of the Mugumo has a relationship with the prayers and the ICC," he said.

During the visit, the land owner, Gichukiirungu had coincidentally called owners of power saws to help cut the tree, but their mission was cut short after the elders said destroying it prior to the ceremony was not advisable.

He said he will wait until the area is cleansed.



Gikuyu and Mumbi Cultural Centre director General Samuel Kamitha with a Gikuyu elder assess Mugumo tree which fell in Tetu district recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

## Child abusers put on notice

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Butere/Khwisero District Children Officer Dishon Otuko has put on notice child abusers saying that they will face the full force of the law.

Otuko who is known to champion child protection services wherever he has worked promised to deal firmly with parents who neglect and fail to take their children to school hence forcing them to resort to hawking at the expense of education.

"The government will take stern action against parents who engage their children in hawking, sale of scrap metals and attending video shows instead of enrolling them in schools for a better future," said Otuko, adding that those who misuse property or finances meant for the orphaned vulnerable children will be dealt with in accordance with the law.

"It is my duty to protect children from abuse and neglect and I will continue to discharge my duties without fear or favour regardless of one's status in society," he said.

The children officer appealed to Butere/Khwisero residents to report any child abuse cases in their respective areas to the police, provincial administration and to the district children's office for prompt action.

Otuko promised to streamline children services in his new station saying he will curb child abuse and neglect in collaboration with the police, the provincial administration, village elders and others who have the calling for the children.

According to the data availed to The Link the children officer has handled a total of 2,480 in Nyeri out of which 2,200 cases were handled in the office whereas 280 cases were heard in court in 2004 and in Busia district, Otuko handled a total of 4,500 cases in the office out of which 450 cases were handled in court between 2005 and 2006.

The data further showed that between 2006 and 2008, the children officer dealt with a total of 2,800 cases in Bungoma out of which 280 cases were handled through the court whereas in Kakamega district, the children's officer handled a total of 2,890 cases with 250 cases being heard in court.

In Samia district where he worked between 2009 and 2012 until his recent transfer, he has handled a total of 2,610 cases at the office level with 110 cases being taken to court.

## UNDP sponsors Katiba Soccer tournament in Othaya

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

A NON-GOVERNMENTAL organization has sponsored a soccer tournament in Othaya involving 11 teams.

The first tournament of a kind which was meant to sensitize the youth on the importance of participating in the electoral process including voting

was held at Othaya stadium recently.

The exercise was sponsored by the UNDP through the Amkeni Wakenya programme which channeled the funds to the Othaya Karima Community Based Organization.

"The games are meant to show that by voting wisely and by voting good leaders, it is the only way to solve youth

problems like unemployment and others. The youth must be involved in voting," said the CBO coordinator Samuel Muchora. The games were also meant to ensure the youth keep away from alcohol and drugs abuse.

"Such games help to kill idleness and tap talents and are good for recreation. This should be done annu-

ally," he said. Shark Soccer team which emerged the winner after thrashing Kabeboro 1-0 goals took home prizes and a full soccer full uniform. Kihome and Jigari soccer teams took the third and fourth position respectively.

Prominent lawyer Priscilla Nyokabi offered civic education during the half time of the games.

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

RESIDENTS of Shariani in Kilifi are up in arms over what they term as an elaborate plot to grab their prime land by prominent people in the country.

The residents led by the chairman of Mokombozi Society Pastor Donald Mzungu claimed that influential people among them a governor aspirant in Mombasa county have targeted their land along the beach line.

Speaking to TheLink at the site, Pastor Mzungu of Shariani Pentecostal church said the residents are tired of losing their land to people who conspire with land officials to acquire title deeds fraudulently and later use the police to evict them.

"As residents of Shariani we are saying enough is enough and we will not allow any strangers to come and

claim ownership for the same," said pastor Mzungu.

Recently 600 squatter families in the area confronted and chased away private surveyors who had come to survey their 2.05 hectares of land in the company of armed police officers.

The squatters claimed the surveyors had been assigned the task to pave way for the sub division of the land by a prominent politician in Mombasa County.

Trouble started when the villagers armed themselves with crude weapons including pangas and confronted the private surveyors and demanded to be told who had assigned them the work.

Pastor Mzungu wondered why the

private surveyors had gone ahead to execute the illegality, yet the squatters had a court injunction from the Mombasa High Court restraining any activity in the said land until legal owners of the disputed land are established.

"We have obtained an injunction at the Mombasa high court so that the stalemate can be resolved once and for all," said Pastor Mzungu

Pastor Mzungu said though the people have been living on the said land since 1952 without any interference, they were shocked in 2010 when strangers started claiming ownership.

The clergyman said the squatters moved to court after their search at the Mombasa land office established

that the land had been allocated to a former Coast Provincial Commissioner who has since been issued with a title deed number CR 4734.

"The disclosure was alarming since we have lived at the disputed plot for decades and we should be given priority in subsequent allocations.

Among those who are targeted for immediate eviction from the disputed land is Mr JumaThoya and his family. He says that he has been living on the piece of land since 1972.

"I settled on this piece of land in 1972 and since then no one has ever claimed ownership until 2010 when I started seeing some strangers," said

Mr.Thoya.

Mr Thoya who is 80 years old said he had nowhere to go if he is evicted from the land which now belongs to a prominent personality.

"If the individual proceeds with the planned eviction, I have nowhere to go because I have lived here since 1972 and I want the government to intervene in the matter" said Mr Thoya.

Another squatter Mr.Muselem Hassan is bitter about the new development and says that prominent people were out to grab their land.

Mr Hassan said the grabbers are using the police and local officers in the provincial administration mostly chiefs to grab their land.

## Residents cry foul over grabbed land



## Recommendations of Kriegler commission report implemented

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

**A**N audit on the implementation of Independent Review of Elections Commission (IREC)-the Kriegler Commission report by Transparency International Kenya reveals that most of the recommendations have been implemented.

These include constitutional, legal and policy interventions that have been effected to actualize the Kriegler recommendations.

There have been constitutional and legal changes in line with the first recommendation concerning the constitutional and legal framework, but it has been observed that these can only be effectively implemented if the letter and spirit of the law is observed.

The report notes that the judicial function of interpretation is considered vital to achieving the desired aspirations of the Kenyan people, particularly with regard to elections and its outcomes.

As noted by the Kriegler Commission, the media has great influence and all Kenyans agree that they are highly influential and the public lends credence to what they hear or see reported. As such, the media set the agenda with powerful effects but the audience bears the greatest responsibility depending on how they decode and interpret messages.

Thus, responsible, accurate, timely and veracious information ought to be disseminated to the public at every juncture. In spite of the gravity of their roles, the verdict is that all these stakeholders do not seem to inspire public confidence in their abilities to successfully conduct their roles.

With the increasing proliferation of media houses owned by politicians' impartiality and professionalism and even political propaganda stand the risk of being seriously compromised hence reversing the gains made so far. Furthermore, the Elections Act focuses on state owned media and the right to equal coverage and accountability. Accountability of private owned media houses is left to Media Council of Kenya to manage through the council's election coverage guidelines.

On vote counting, tallying and transmission, implementation is very much a work in progress and the new mechanisms are untested.

On the issue of post-election pro-



Mr. Kriegler.

cedures, the consensus is that the pitfalls associated with this stage of the electoral process cannot be clearly foreseen. It can only be anticipated that the number of elective seats would exponentially increase the instances of election suits and that a run-off might practically be very challenging to hold. It is no consolation that the law as relates to presidential run-off is obscure.

However, not much response was obtained on post-election procedures, the reason being that it is an untested area and a wait and see attitude was the best that position that could be taken. Not much preparedness has been exhibited by IEBC and other stakeholders in the electoral process.

The audit notes that implementation has not been without challenges and gaps. It was noted that an electronic system is only as good as the person inputting the information.

Thus, if the wrong data was fed into the system, the wrong informa-

tion would be obtained. Delays and clogging of the systems cannot be ruled out considering the vagaries of technology.

On the other hand, security for the IEBC staff and polling materials is key and the attack on IEBC officials in Malindi during a mock poll exercise is notable.

There will be about 40,000 polling stations and each would require two police officers and it is obvious that the police may not match this requirement.

The audit looked at six main issues identified by the Independent Review of Elections Commission (IREC) namely: the country's constitutional and legal framework relating to elections, structure and composition of the electoral management body, the electoral environment and the role of political parties, civil society organisations, the media and observers, electoral preparations, vote counting, tallying and announcement

of results and Post-election procedures.

An Audit of its Implementation finds that the IEBC intends to live up to its name and to deliver a credible and fair election to Kenyans. However, the report recommends that the management of polling day operations must be well thought out and all technical and other forms of relevant assistance ought to be extended to the IEBC.

In regard to the issue of the electoral environment, role of political parties, civil society organisations, observers and the media, it is agreed that all these stakeholders are necessary to validate the transparency and legitimacy of the electoral process.

However, this can only be achieved where they conduct their roles professionally and with neutrality. Political parties owe the country a duty to ensure that fair conduct, practice and factual information guide their activities, while civil society organisations and observers are meant to act in a non-partisan manner to ensure that transparency and credibility are built into the process.

The government on its part also owes the electorate a duty to put in place adequate mechanisms for free and fair elections.

## Nyeri residents want Salaries Commission to address pay disparities

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Salaries and Remuneration Commission should address disparities in salaries of state officers, a public hearing on the recently released salary structures was told in Nyeri.

Speaker after the other lamented of huge disparities in the pay of some officers and urged the commission to address the issue by harmonizing the pay package and reducing the disparity.

Anglican Church of Kenya Reverend Bildad Wang'ondu observed that the disparities could cause discord in the workforce leading to unproductivity by those earning low salaries.

"The president's salary should not go beyond Ksh. 1 million per month. We need to slash further the proposed Ksh. 1.7 million while the least paid public officer should earn not less than Ksh 30,000 monthly," said Wang'ondu.

He suggested that academic qualifications must be used to determine remuneration noting that workers with similar qualifications should not be paid differently.

A lawyer Patrick Macharia faulted the proposed remuneration structure arguing that it had huge disparities especially for judicial officers.

Macharia cited the proposed pay for a Kadhi of Ksh 84,000 monthly while other judicial officers such a high court judge would earn Ksh 728, 000.

He noted that the discrepancy in remuneration would affect dispensation of justice as some of the poorly paid officers could easily be compromised.

Another speaker, Kinoti Manyara welcomed the proposed slashing of salaries of senior state officers and suggested that the money should be ploughed back to the economy to create more jobs and thus employ more Kenyans.

The public forum was moderated by commissioner Isaiah Kubai who said that the proposed remuneration structure would take effect after the March 4th elections adding that his commission would later embark to restructure public officers' remuneration.



Konrad  
Adenauer  
Stiftung

The Link appreciates the facilitation  
accorded by the Konrad Adenauer  
Stiftung (KAS) in Kenya.