

# Govt allocates Ksh20.8bn to CDF

By PATRICIA WAFULA

**D**ESPITE the controversy surrounding the legality of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in the devolved system of government, treasury has transferred a staggering Kshs 20,875,205,000 billion towards the kitty during this financial year.

Kinango and Mandera South Constituencies have received the biggest share of allocations with the former receiving the lion's share of Ksh 170,958,724 and the latter reaping a significant allocation of Ksh 159,508,890.

Magarini Constituency received the third highest allocation of Kshs 149,441,658 while Turkana West came fourth with a disbursement of Ksh 143,278,837.

Other Constituencies that received big allocations include Kilifi North with an allocation Kshs 125,335,219, Lunga Lunga received Ksh 124,366,498, Ganze bagged Ksh 114,943,238 Mandera North got Ksh 112,769,719, Kisauni received Ksh 112,388,140, Turkana North with Ksh 109,067,450, Mandera West with Ksh 108,528,697.

Constituencies with least allocations include Lamu East with a paltry of Ksh 30,518,281, Saku with Ksh



Devolution and Planning Cabinet Secretary Ms. Anne Waiguru.

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## Constitution transforms education into a vehicle of social mobility

By PETER MUTUKU

THE new Constitution institutionalizes education as the way for upward social mobility, makes the state its custodian and distributor, and goes to the extent of commanding affirmative action in certain circumstances.

The Constitution Article 43(1) spells out that every person has the right to education. In addition Article 53 provides that every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education.

Further, Article 54 (1) directs that persons with disability are entitled to access educa-

tional institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities that are integrated into society to the extent compatible with the interests of the person.

This is reaffirmed by Article 55 which stipulates that the State shall take measures, including affirmative action programmes, to ensure that the youth (a) access relevant education and training.

The Constitution (Article 56) also provides that the State shall put in place affirmative action programmes designed to ensure that minorities and marginalised groups are provided special opportunities in educational and eco-

nomie fields.

Although the Constitution does not provide any definition of education, the above articles seem to identify the role of the state as a custodian of human rights and a welfare provider. Within the context of the Constitution, it would seem that the above quoted articles assume education is geared to employment, which depends directly on certification.

If we consider the extraordinary demand for education in Kenya, it could be an indication that there are very few other opportunities for Kenyans to progress in life without it. This angle justifies establishing education as a hu-

man right, but we still need to explore how to discharge this duty.

We could add another angle to this analysis: since worldwide experience is showing that one of the problems with welfare states is sustainability, we must ask ourselves how we are going to free the education system from corruption to maximise the use of resources in Kenya. This brings to the fore another question: how can a corrupt and bureaucratic education system dispense affirmative action? Will it have any credibility?

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# Government allocates Ksh20.8 billion to CDF

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41,622,224, Wundanyi with Ksh 45,460,240, Isiolo South has been allocated Ksh 48,080,506, Mwatate with Ksh 49,467, 337, Taveta with Ksh 52,282,219, Lamu West with allocation of Ksh 56,755,998, Central Imenti Ksh 57,314,949, Balambala Ksh 57, 533,062 and Voi Ksh 59,141,687.

The allocations were primarily based on population, poverty index, land area, basic equal share and fiscal responsibility.

A dispatch from the Ministry of devolution signed by the Cabinet Secretary Ann Waiguru reveals that 45 percent of the allocation has been shared on the basis of population as this reflects expenditure needs in respective constituencies.

In addition, 25 percent has been shared equally among all the 290 Constituencies in the country in a bid to ensure they are treated equally regardless of their size and population.

More significantly, 20 percent has been assigned to bridge the poverty gap with a view to ensuring that the poor move above the poverty line.

"The poverty contribution index is adjusted using urban rural population factor where the rural population constitutes 68 percent while urban is 32 percent of the whole population.

Constituencies have also received 8 percent of the total allocation based on their respective sizes with limits of 0.001 for Constituencies whose land area is below the 0.001 share of the total country and an upper limit of 0.010 for largest constituencies.

Two percent has been earmarked for fiscal discipline to reward constituencies that practice prudent management of the financial resources.

"Given that there is no factor on Fiscal discipline parameter yet, the two percent of this budget is divided equally among the 290 constituencies," adds the Cabinet Sec-

retary as outlined in the table below.

The Cabinet Secretary further points out that CDF allocation follows the enactment of CDF Act 2013, which has been

aligned to Article 217 of the Constitution.

Other additional funding going to Constituencies include Ksh 6 billion through the Uwezo Fund, Ksh 137, 670,000 through the Youth Enterprise

Development Fund and Ksh 167,200,000 disbursed through the Women Enterprise Fund.

The CDF allocation is a sharp contrast with the Budget Policy statement which proposed that the CDF be incorporated into

the revenue to the County governments as an additional grant on top of the allocation to be determined by the CRA formula.

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 fourth Schedule of the Constitution clearly demarcates the functions of the national and the County governments, for instance;

- Local infrastructure projects: county abattoirs, county transport, markets, county public works and services.

- County planning and development

- Ensuring and coordinating the participation of communities and locations in governance at the local level and assisting communities and locations to develop the administrative capacity for the effective exercise of the functions and powers and participation in governance at the local level.

The CDF Act 2013, however disrespects the functional distinctness of County governments on several grounds including:

The CDF Act provides a framework for the assignment of funds to implement development programmes in the counties without regard to the constitutional distribution of functions between national and county governments.

The Act provides that a specific portion of the national annual budget is devoted to the constituencies for purposes of infrastructural development, wealth creation and in the fight against poverty at the constituency level.

The Act states that the projects to be implemented should be community based; CDF funds projects that fall within the functional jurisdiction of county governments. The Act section 22(1) projects under this Act shall be community based in order to ensure that the prospective benefits are available to a widespread cross section of inhabitants of a particular area.

## CDF Allocation shares

Item		Amount	Remarks
2.5 percent of the Government ordinary revenue		21,973,900,000	Total CDF Allocation
Net out 5 percent		1,098,695,000	Set aside for CDF Board Secretariat
95 percent Net CDF		20,875,205,000	Net CDF for distribution
Parameters	Percentage Weights	Amount	Remarks
Population	45 %	9,393,842,250	Population share to total population
Poverty Index	20%	4,175,041,000	Poverty Contribution to total poor
Land Area	8%	1,670,016,400	Land area share to total land cover
Basic Equal Share	25%	5,218,801,250	Equal share
Fiscal Responsibility	2%	417,504,100	Equal share
Total	100	20,875,205,000	



Treasury Building, Nairobi.

# Governor in support of girl-child education

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

KAKAMEGA Governor Wycliffe Oparanya has called on parents to accord equal opportunities to their children to help the county meet the two thirds gender threshold.

Oparanya says that the county plans to stick with the two thirds gender rule when making appointments to fill any vacant positions

He announced that once recruit-

ment of personnel at county level begins, the one-third gender rule would be adhered to as he encouraged female students to ensure they attained the highest level of education.

"When we begin recruiting, we will be looking for women who are educated to ensure that we meet the constitutional requirement of gender balance. The jobs will be advertised in at least two daily newspapers and everyone is encouraged to apply, but

they must follow correct channels," he said.

Oparanya said he would go ahead with a plan to employ Early Childhood Development Education teachers despite the fact that the function is yet to be devolved to county level by the Transition Authority.

The governor was speaking in Buchenya Girls Secondary School in Butere constituency where he also pledged to donate a bus to the school,

through his government. The school was started in 2003 under the patronage of Oparanya during his tenure as the area legislator.

"When it comes to infrastructure in primary and secondary schools, the national government is never involved. These schools started benefiting with the advent of CDF. Your area MP should now take over and ensure CDF is effectively used to bring development to our schools," he said.

While addressing residents during the same occasion, the governor reiterated his earlier stance declaring that the county should be given a more deserving role in ODM because of the support it accorded the party leader Raila Odinga in the last polls.

"The party should look at Western and reward us accordingly. More than 300,000 votes that Raila scooped in the presidential race came from Kakamega," said the governor.

# Shock as children in public schools fail to impress in study

By HENRY OWINO

MANY school going children in Kenya are being drilled or coached on how to pass examinations instead of comprehending the syllabus for future benefits. This was revealed by Uwezo Kenya at the launch of annual report on Learning Assessment at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in Nairobi.

The report states that three out of ten children in class three cannot do class two work. It further reveals that over 50 out of 100 children in class four and five cannot comprehend stories written for class two pupils. Again 12 out of 100 children in class Six and Seven could not understand a class two story even if they could read it.

The report posed the question whether the mere presence of children in school translates to serious learning. After sitting for any exam, most children cannot answer the same question if twisted in a different way without altering the meaning. In short, teachers are after means score grades other than competency.

The study said at least 10 percent of teachers in public schools are always out of school during official learning hours. This shows that absenteeism among teachers is as high as students missing schools without genuine reasons.

Approximately a pupil misses school up to 14 days in a month while teachers may be in school but not attend lessons. Other teachers also go to class to make stories with pupils on current affairs but not necessarily to teach.

Nancy Macharia, the director of Teachers Service Commission management said poor supervision in schools leads to absenteeism and desertion. She said the commission will introduce a teacher appraisal system to curb absenteeism.

Macharia attributed the low standards of teaching to the changing of curriculum without training teachers. "We will introduce an appraisal system for teachers

whose subjects perform highly and the targets are going to be set by head teachers and county education boards," Macharia said.

She regrets that stakeholders must begin to question the efficiency of quality assurances officers whose mandate is to supervise learning. She recalled that in the past trained school inspectors used to supervise learning.

Macharia noted that some teachers are not competent in certain subjects and have problems in spelling. So, the commission plans to give packages to improve teachers' ability to teach in their subject areas.

"We are going to provide the programme in modules to be done in three years after which teachers will be given certificates. It will be difficult to teach in a public or private school in future without this certificate," she said.

Various stakeholders have acknowledged that there is a crisis in the education sector that must be addressed urgently, following a damning report that suggested many class eight candidates can barely read or write.

The Uwezo Kenya, a non-governmental organization which deals with research and education policies, released its findings on the literacy and numeracy skills in public schools.

The research demonstrates that it is not enough for the government to concentrate on increasing enrolment, gender parity, improved infrastructure and teacher recruitment, without addressing the issue of quality.

Vision 2030 Director General Mugo Kibati, Baringo Governor Benjamin Cheboi, National Assembly Committee on Education chairperson Sabina Chege admit-

ted that there was a problem and radical measures should be taken to salvage the situation.

The three, who were present during the official launch of the report by Uwezo Kenya Country Co-coordinator John Mugo, noted that there was need for radical shift to look into learning outcomes. They regretted that a vast majority of Kenyan children in public schools are not able to perform at the required level.

The report documented that too many children complete primary schooling without basic competencies in reading and arithmetic.

Dr Kibati stated that the report was a yardstick to measure where the country is in terms of education, which is key pillar of Vision 2030. He warned that for Vision 2030 to be realized, the country must invest heavily in education.

"We do not have a choice, we

must succeed in achieving Vision 2030 and education is a vital social pillar," Dr Kibati stressed.

Dr Kibati welcomed the Uwezo report noting that it has provided a clear insight of the education situation in the country.

"As the government offers compulsory education and curriculum reforms, quality of education is important to conform with the changing times," he said.

Mugo, the Uwezo Kenya Country Co-coordinator noted that this is the third report and hopes that the government will address key issues raised. The organization's regional manager Sara Ruto on her part noted that the low learning levels affects all Kenyans.

She called upon the government to intervene urgently as the situation may worsen with frequent teachers' strikes, children and teachers absenteeism.



Children are being coached on how to pass examinations.

## ICT remains critical towards the realization of Vision 2030

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

INFORMATION Communication Technology (ICT) is key to the realization of vision 2030, a District Education Officer (DEO) in Kakamega County has affirmed.

Navakholo DEO, Sarah Ayumba, is categorical that pupils in primary schools today must be computer literate if Vision 2030 is to be achieved.

Ayumba says that the generation in primary school now is being prepared for vision 2030 and thus must be equipped with ICT skills.

Speaking recently at Bright Academy during prize giving cum education day where she was the chief guest, Ayumba challenged private primary schools in the district to introduce computer lessons.

She urged managers of private primary schools to ensure that their curriculum remain relevant by introducing ICT in line with the Jubilee government manifesto. "When the government buys laptops for standard one pupils in public schools next year private schools should also do the same," the DEO says.

The DEO at the same time urged the Luhya community to embrace girl-child education adding that they must be accorded equal opportunities with the boys in matters pertaining to education.

She points out that under normal circumstances girls should be given the opportunity, including affirmative action criteria to go through all levels of education without discrimination.

"Girls should not only be taken to school but also allowed to complete the education cycle without disruption," she says.

Speaking at the function, one of the managers of private primary schools concurred with the DEO that private schools should also embrace ICT in line with the government policy.

The director of Bright Academy, Mr. Rodgers Nato disclosed that his school has put measures in place to ensure that computer lessons start this term.

## Parents push for adoption of mother tongue at lower levels of school

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

MOTHER tongue is an essential foundation for learning, but will it ever be practical in Kenya?

This is a question that stakeholders in the education sector continue to grapple with.

Participants at Elimu Yetu Coalition one day workshop in Bungoma drawn from the ministry of education, civil society and parents were of the view that pupils joining school should be taught in mother tongue as it played a critical role in their development.

They pointed out that for purposes of self-esteem and identity, children in lower primary should be taught in their mother tongue languages.

"Mother tongue is an essential foundation for learning as much as acquiring proficiency in Kiswahili and English has advantages," a participant noted.

School is an alien place for

young children who begin class work in a language different from their own, they complained.

The language of instruction at school makes young children, believe that the language they have known from birth is inferior compared to the language at school.

Experts for long time have recognized the importance of children using their mother tongue when they begin school.

A study by UNICEF in the late 1990s in Zambia showed that students who began schooling using English instead of their mother tongue did not acquire enough proficiency to learn well by grades three or six.

However shortage of teaching materials and training programmes, were noted as the biggest challenges.

Teachers were blamed for not understanding their indigenous languages and being the enemies when it comes to the promotion of mother

tongue instructions.

"Mother tongue instruction in schools is frustrated by teachers, who themselves cannot read or write in their own languages", a participant claimed.

But parents were not spared either, as it was said that most have developed a negative attitude towards their languages, making children to despise them.

Joseph Wasikhongo, the programme manager with Elimu Yetu, commented the participants for coming up with the proposal, which should be pushed and taken up by policy makers at county and national governments.

"If what you people are saying makes sense, then, time has come to ensure that a policy is developed and enforced in implementation," said Wasikhongo.

On teacher recruitment, the participants said that it should be done through rationalization.

This should be adopted as urban

centres are overstuffed, yet the shortage is felt more in rural schools.

They all agreed that having more teachers can be essential when it comes to addressing quality education.

The participants were told to be proactive in engaging education to have their inputs in county education reports, thus put pressure on TSC to employ teachers depending on demand.

Elimu Yetu Coalition is a national platform for civil society organization, professionals groupings, education and research institutions, which lobbies for implementation education for all.

Its objectives include seeking to influence policy shift towards a sustainable basic education and training system that is appropriate to the aspirations of Kenyans.

It also aims to build a strong movement with very clear direction and targets around basic education and training.

# Constitution transforms education into a vehicle of social mobility

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There is one further question we must ask ourselves: whether the present ills of society, such as corruption, have anything to do with the education system. Although increasing the education system output is a lofty target, can it be done without due regard to the transmission of values? Furthermore, whose duty it is to teach values: the state, the community, the family or religion? If it is not the state's duty, what provision is there to allow mediating structures to discharge this responsibility?

### The role of the state

Traditionally there are two sides to justice:

- Commutative justice to regulate the mutual giving and receiving. In the case of contracts for example, they are not just an instrument of self-assertion but of rendering the other parties their due. In this case, an individual is confronted with another as equals.

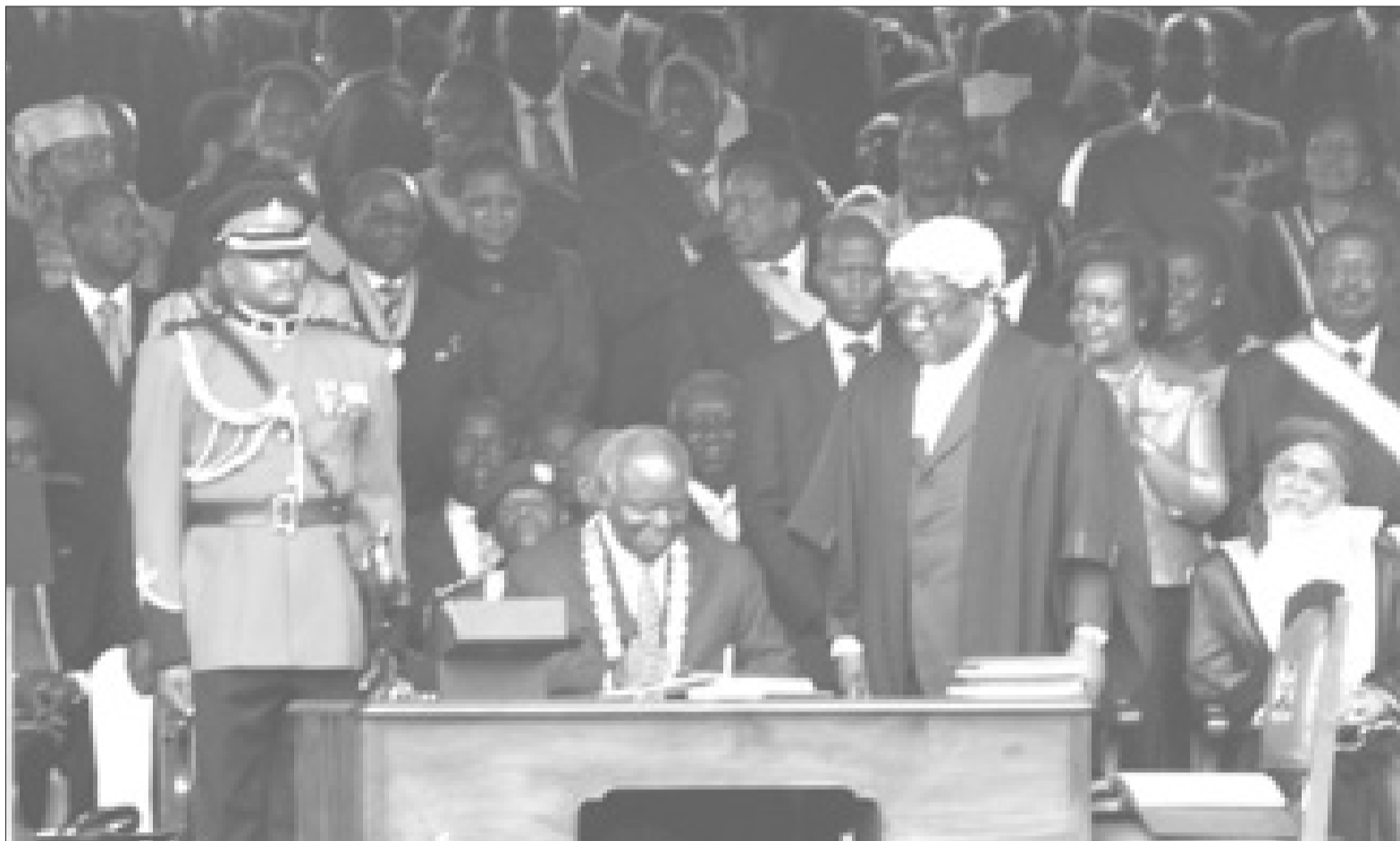
- Distributive justice to regulate the distribution a ruler or steward gives to each according to what he or she deserves. It refers to the right order in the relation between those who have power and those who are entrusted with this power. In this case, an individual is confronted with the social whole: both parties are not equal. Family members within a family for example.

From the point of view of distributive justice the whole ranks higher than the individual, therefore it would seem that this approach sits more comfortably within a welfare state than within a system that fosters individualism or collectivism. The governor, ruler or lawgiver, as administrator of the common will, must render an account of his or her actions and is obliged to give the individual members of the whole their due.

The new constitution defines an obligation due to the individual in his relation toward the social whole that is in principle different from his due as creditor toward debtor in a situation of commutative justice. What belongs to him and the way it belongs to him are quite different. Something belonging to him exclusively is different from what belongs to him as a share of something that is common to the whole. In commutative justice, the obligation is discharged normally by paying, whereas in distributive justice, the obligation is discharged by allotting.

In the case of distributive justice, justice and equity cannot be achieved by consideration of the actual value only, but by the proportion that corresponds to the person. In commutative justice, such approach is both meaningful and possible. Hence a just price would do, as determined by the market as an independent third party.

In the case of education, distributive justice refers us to proportional equality, e.g. the same opportunities,



Former President, Mwai Kibaki, signs the new Constitution into law. Photo/File

while commutative justice would regulate a quantitative equality, e.g. same financial aid.

Can our institutions combine genuine authority (commutative justice) with the recognition of the individual person to whom a right is absolutely due from the social whole (distributive justice)? Moreover, is education something to which the individual has an irrevocable claim, even when confronted with the social whole [the state]?

### The Constitution, devolution and solidarity

The problems of corruption and excessive bureaucracy in the education system were highlighted recently when a donor country announced the withdrawal of funding support through the Ministry of Education. The donor also stated that it would continue funding programmes by-passing the Ministry.

In the field of justice, the distinguishing mark of an obligation is the possibility of compelling its execution. Is it possible to command something that cannot be measured? Or to put it in simple terms: is it possible to compare two different affirmative interventions taken in different financial years? Otherwise we cannot compare distributive justice interventions of different financial years.

The State represents the social whole and administers the common good. It is true that the family, the community, free associations and religion play a role in the common good. But the harmonising and integration of all men's functions occurs only in the political community: power can be wielded if the

common good demands it, without forgetting that distributive justice cannot be enforced. The purpose of power is to realise and guard justice but it is really difficult to impose distributive justice on the state as suggested by article No 20 (5).

The inability to measure and control the dispensation of distributive justice can be minimised by involving the right organs in its execution. A mother within the family context is always applying distributive justice according to the circumstances of the family members and the means at her disposal. It would be ridiculous for the state to meddle; not even a fully trained magistrate can replace a mother in her family role. It would seem then that a prudent application of the principle of devolution would solve this problem. However, although this principle has been applied extensively in the new Constitution, it did not affect education because the centralisation of the education system at national level remains.

The inherent problem to quantify distributive justice leaves us with basically two main options: introduce choices at national level, like a variety of examination boards and therefore a choice of curricula; hope that Kenyan will continue practicing the virtue of solidarity, which 'is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, but a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good'.

There is a tendency to overlook that the present uniformity of the 8-4-4 system produces many failures and therefore need a more inclusive system. There would be

many more failures were it not for the social fabric of solidarity that many Kenyans sustain according to their possibilities, and under their own responsibility.

Distributive justice is difficult to realize because the common good resists any form of measurement. If we consider it just as the 'social product', the total product of community life, we may leave aside all those things that are not immediately useful, such as the patience and commitment of a teacher to her students. It is obvious that the common good is not quantifiable because it is 'the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily'.

Therefore distributive justice applied to the common good is about letting and encouraging individual members of a nation and its institutions to share in the realisation of a common good that cannot be definitely delineated in concrete terms and therefore requires the participation of all at the appropriate levels.

### The way forward

The Kenya budget does not produce a surplus. On the contrary, Government borrowing seems to be constantly on the increase. In spite of official rhetoric, educational standards are not improving; what is increasing is the number of people the education system is producing.

The number of people employed in the formal sector is not increasing significantly. What is increasing is the competition for virtually the same number of jobs which keeps on fuelling the diploma disease. The unhappiness of teachers in the pub-

lic sector about their terms of service is too well known to comment on. Constraints to maintain public facilities are obvious.

The Constitution Fourth Schedule allocates to the national government education policy, standards, curricula, examinations and the granting of university charters, leaving no room for devolution to the counties with the exception of pre-primary education, village polytechnics, home-craft centres and child-care facilities.

Article 203 spells out criteria for the equitable sharing of national revenue. How can Kenyans implement and sustain the constitutional requirements on education? Why the silence on traditional partners such as churches, charitable institutions and the private sector?

We can offer just one thought: devolving some of the attributions of the central government on education is not factored into the constitution. But it is possible to outsource to strategic partners, segregate responsibilities to make all parties more accountable to distributive justice and improve the common good.

Kenyans could allow the development of several examining boards and do away with the monopoly of the Kenya National Examinations Council. They could re-introduce grant-in-aid or matching grants to mobilise community resources and manage them independently of the Ministry of Education. They could give tax incentives to channel private resources toward education and encourage partnerships to develop centres of excellence. The possibilities are many depending on the interpretation of the Fourth Schedule.

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

KENYA'S publishing industry has been the only sector that operated for years with a minimum underhand from the twin forces of tribalism and corruption, but a recent survey revealed that as per today this is the most tribalised and politicized industry in Kenya which now allows the corruptible powers that be to call the tune.

Borrowing a style of analysis from Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* in which dictatorship in Africa is established as a cult enticed by both the oppressor and the oppressed. Tribalism and corruption in Kenya often form a social-political blend that transcends itself into a syndrome which tickles both the corrupter and corrupted, it is a syndrome which spreads like a cancerous cell and now it is here with us in the body of the publishers. It is a syndrome of public office abuse and ethnicity. It is not only in the print media publishers that the vice is thriving but among all the book publishers, university academic paper publishers, journal publishers, and tabloid as well as newsletter publishers, leaving the Kenyan young writers with the digital social media as the only communication platform on which terrors of tribe and money don't reign.

The established book publishers in Kenya have a keen nose of commerce and politics. They do not publish to store and disseminate knowledge. But instead they publish either to make money or to gain political favour. What are their tools towards the goals? On money making, they have seasoned the art of recycling the old writers. They re-print and re-brand the same and pristine Achebe, Soyinka and Ngugi. They solicit for the manuscripts from such aged writers left, center and right. They rather publish a profile of Mazrui and Taban Lo Liyong or academic history of the Ugandan poet, Ogot P'Bitek and John Ruganda's intellectual appreciation of Imbuga's political comedies than even giving a look at manuscript of a penniless young writer from a family without stature of fame and politics. It was out of the spirit of condemning this vice that had one young frustrated writer from Kenya whom I happened to talk to make a desperate and misfortunate comment about Chinua Achebe's death that; 'It is good such

# Publishers in Kenya have also succumbed to tribalism and money

old people like Achebe, Soyinka and Ngugi have began dying so that we young writers can also have an opportunity to be published. They are nothing else other than capitalists of literature." To my chagrin this young man was not joking, was very earnest and calm. I mused about it; what a mourning so un-African!

On equal footing as money, politics and ethnic network monkey-wrenches Kenyan publishers like a Greek marionette in the hands of a heroic Negro gladiator. Political heavy weights easily publish. Whether whatever they are publishing is trash or treasure, they are often published smoothly. The vicious logic of all these pertains in the tribe and dirtiness of politics. It was out of this peccadillo that a Nigerian man emerged with a caricature of a book entitled *Raila Odinga*; Kenya's political enigma. This was some few months preceding the 2007 general elections. The intellectual pithiness of this book was and is heavy. It

has left the reading community in Kenya deeply agog to an extent that dear reader, the only words that can be used to describe the situation is 'communal discombobulation'.

Those who have been in Kenya in the past two years must have had a glimpse of this publishing vice through practical encounter with Kenya's two main circulating papers the *Daily Nation* and *The East African Standard*. The weekend editions of these papers have pages on literary discourse. The *Nation* has it in the *Saturday Nation* and the *Standard* in the *Sunday Standard*. The eyesore of time in both of these editions is a plethora of old and rich writers writing about old and rich authors. In both the editions you will obviously meet Ezekiel Mwazemba discussing Shakespeare, Tom Odhiambo discussing Ngugi, Okello Oculi praising poetry of P'Bitek as a tool of anthropology, Tom Mochoma appreciating Lolita of Vladimir Nabokov, Chakava praising Ngugi or Alexander Opicho describing Frantz Fanon and

Denis Brutus as white African writers while at the same time in the same editions, the same Alexander Opicho is associating literary mystery with the name of Alexander Pushkin. Indeed, who can wear the blinkers to such an open sore in any society?

History of publishing discrimination in Kenya has its tap roots deeply impeded in the volcanic soils of the colonial era. This was when white settlers were owners of all the media and book publishing firms. Writing and publishing therefore was a reserve of the white. Africans had nowhere to publish their ideas. As Tom Mboya recounts in *Freedom and after*; invitation of a liberal Aga Khan to Kenyan publishing market on which he established the *Nation* media group was simply one effort against colonial misrule.

May be this legacy of publishing discrimination was passed piecemeal to the all subsequent governments in Kenya. The governments of the day and politically connected class have

always used publishing as a weapon of power. They use a printed word to get power and maintain power against genuine intellectual efforts of true and honest but discommunicated writers. It was this political sub-culture that partially contributed to dispelling of intellectuals away from Kenya to Tanzania and other intellectual hubs during the last century. The top scholars like Walter Rodney who authored *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*, Frantz Fanon, Micere Mugo, Abdalla Abdatallatif and Ayi Kwei Armah all stayed in Tanzania, from where they researched and published because of intellectual friendly political culture which held publishing discrimination at distaste.

In spite of political misfortunes Uganda contrasts a lot with Kenya. A young writer in Uganda will meet lesser impediments in his career path as contrasted to Kenya. This intellectual freedom is barely seen in the *Monitor*, Uganda's Daily paper published in English. There is practice of genuine editing, publishing by content not by tribe and class and objectivity of information as key attributes of this Ugandan daily paper. These are the publishing virtues that recently frustrated President Yoweri Museveni to make an unreasonable move of closing down this paper.

The side effects of practicing discriminatory publishing have but only led Kenya to a crystallized pedestal of negative results useful in only extending the pale of the society, both economically and socially. Kenyan young book writers have resorted to publishing in Germany. This is sad when faced with a bare fact that Kenyans are sending their manuscripts to publishers in Germany, But once the books are published, Kenyan readers in turn are conditionally bound to import these very books at a very expensive price because of tax, transport and haulage fees and also a reality due to an economic condition that a Kenyan shilling is very weak against European dollar.



Set of textbooks. Photo/File

## Effects of devolution on learning institutions

By PETER MUTUKU

Our colonial history confirms that most of Kenya's development was deliberately restricted to 160 kilometers of either side of the Kenya-Uganda railway. This was so, because the colonial government needed to demonstrate the viability of a railway that had cost millions of British tax payers' money. To this end, towns and centres within the defined mileage astride the railway were developed so much so that, that is what defined Kenya for years. The effects of these are evident to date. Our five major towns and cities are the key highlights of the railway land marks.

The areas away from the railway, received little attention and hence, the reason that most institutions of learning at all levels, are concentrated along the railway. Devolution in its true sense, it is hoped, will ensure that the effects of the colonial blue print will be done away with. The equalization fund is one such mechanism to bridge the gap in disadvantaged areas.

Our institutions have leveraged on existing infrastructure to expand. Take the case of our universities many

of which have satellite campuses in all major towns. It is worth noting, that devolution, will impact on the different levels of learning institutions. Let us begin with our education system as we know it today.

Primary schools will definitely benefit from increased funding in the county governments. The sensitive nature of education in this country and, the legal requirement to have all children enjoying basic education; will definitely encourage spending on schooling. With this, will be the need for more teachers. The counties that get it right will attract pupils from less ambitious counties and thus a growing market for consumables. The schools hitherto enjoying good infrastructural advantages and prime locations will have to pull up their socks because the competition brought about by an equalizing constitution will be fast and furious. It is anticipated, that the slowdown in rural-urban migration, will impact somehow negatively on town schools.

Secondary Schools will equally experience most of what their juniors will be going through. With a national school in every county envisaged to be

in place, challenges of national integration may emerge because, parents will prefer a minimum schooling distance approach especially, if going far away from home is no longer tenable through standards. Rules on quotas for students coming from across the country will be difficult to achieve under such circumstances. Population growth and an increase of available money for education will drive growth in size and number of schools. These in turn will drive up the employment of teachers and non-teaching staff.

Tertiary institutions such as those offering certificates and diplomas will grow. Kenya is transforming into a knowledge economy and will increase its dependence on people with formal knowledge, to drive developmental objectives. To this end, a trend will emerge, where older citizens who had not reached these levels, will enrol in tertiary institutions alongside those graduating from secondary schools. With a better life expectancy today, mature age entry students will be on the increase. Again, there will be need for more tutors and institutions.

Universities as we can see today

will continue to expand and new ones will come up. A number of reasons will make this possible.

First, the minimum learning distance policy supported by most parents will see students learn from nearby. These days, we do not have the 80s and 90s hype of sending students to India, the United States and England.

People will also have a wider choice of disciplines to choose from. There will also be an increase in people pursuing Masters and Doctoral degrees. Secondly, Universities as part of the ecosystem will play a key role in providing thought leadership to the communities that they exist in.

Relevant research will be made possible by proximity to the needs. What was only possible through government extension officers will be possible with the help of universities.

The government has played a big role in upgrading tertiary institutions into universities across the country. Universities, tend to bring about university towns which in turn, stabilize the economies of their respective locations. Thousands of consumers are good for business. Such business would not have

been possible if devolution was not introduced.

An economy will not grow on academics alone. Sources of income should be as we can now see, expanded to include entertainment and sports. The new policy on having 60 percent of television content being local, will spur talent in entertainment as more comedies and programs come on board. These will now become a sustainable industry and will require institutions that nurture such talent. Soccer academies will now sprout as well as a myriad of other none academic institutions across the country.

Devolved governments will guarantee increased circulation of money and talent in areas that had no institutions before. Growth is total meaning that we shall see activity in the building sector as new facilities come up, more banks cashing in on teachers and just about all other sectors getting their share.

All in all, inter county competition will strive to minimize student exportation on account of better facilities because overall, it will boil down to taking money away from the county.

# Court of Appeal opens its doors in Nyeri town

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

A NEW Court of Appeal has been inaugurated in Nyeri town.

Litigants in Nyeri County have received a major reprieve following the establishment of a Court of Appeal in the area.

The Chief Justice who is also the President of the Supreme Court of Kenya Willy Mutunga said this is the first Court of Appeal to be launched outside Nairobi and aims at bringing services closer to the ordinary Kenyans.

Mutunga who was accompanied by Court of Appeal judges and High Court judges said the court will not only save the taxpayer the cost of travel, but also create time for judges to do more – more reading, more listening and more judging. The results are already becoming apparent.

Mutunga said there were 86 criminal appeals pending at the time when decentralization began two months ago, 34 cases have been finalised and 32 fresh appeals filed.

He added that there were 175 pending civil appeals, of which the court has decided 57 and received 13 new ones.

“This will ease the backlog as the system of rotating Court of Appeal judges on circuits meant that appeals filed in Nyeri could only be heard once, maybe twice in a year even as they piled month by month,” he said.

The CJ said in an effort to speed



From left: **President Court of Appeal Justice Kihara Kariuki, Chief Justice Willy Mutunga, judges Otiendo and Alnashir Visram at Nyeri law courts recently after Mutunga opened the Nyeri Court of Appeal.**  
Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

up the wheels of justice, the Judicial Service Commission hired 15 new Court of Appeal judges last year, in addition to the seven recruited in the year 2011.

“Early this year, the Court of Appeal listed, heard and concluded 200 cases in Mombasa and Nairobi. We believe that these initiative will be replicated everywhere in Kenya,” he

said.

Besides the large numbers in Nairobi, Mombasa had 805 pending cases, Kisumu 903 and Nyeri 447. Since mid April, judges have been posted to Malindi, Kisumu, Eldoret and Nyeri, where they have begun to have a great impact in reducing pending cases.

Those present in the function in-

cluded Chief registrar Gladys Shollei, Court of Appeal President Justice Kihara Kariuki, Justice Alnashir Visram of the Nyeri Court of Appeal judge, Nyeri governor Nderitu Gachagua, Nyeri senator Mutahi Kagwe and Nyeri town MP Esther Murugi.

Gachagua urged Mutunga to start a 24-hour court which will be able to cater for the petty offenders.

“Decentralising the Court of Appeal makes it the most accessible highest court across the country. This court shall radiate its knowledge across the country as a model for all the others. Its leadership in promoting constitutional development, through its appellate jurisdiction, becomes weightier if a matter is not litigated in the Supreme Court,” he added.

He added that although the Supreme Court is the final court in Kenya, it can choose whether or not to hear an appeal. This means that the Court of Appeal will be the final forum for litigating many cases.

Mutunga added that every county should have a high court as per the law requires to ease the number of cases going to appeal.

Already, there are Court of Appeal judges hearing cases in Malindi, Kisumu and Eldoret and hope that in time, Nakuru, too, can also have a Court of Appeal.

At the same time, the Central region State counsel Job Kaigai has said that the office of Director of Prosecutions is planning to open offices in the 47 counties in the country.

Kaigai said already the Murang'a county office is operational and very soon there will be offices in Kerugoya, Nyahururu and other towns. The counsel said this will help in easing the backlog of cases so that many of the cases are heard on time.

He however lamented that the office is being affected by staff shortages.

“We are planning to hire more staff in order to service Kenyans efficiently and effectively. We don't want to hear the court blaming the prosecution department,” he said.

He said the government will ensure every office has enough staff since the DPP office is now an independent body.

## Security lapse at public beach turns away tourists

By ANTHONY ZOKA

BEACH operators at Jomo Kenyatta public beach have decried the rising cases of insecurity in the area and blamed it on lack of security lights.

They said efforts to put up public lights under the program dubbed “Mombasa beatification” stalled two years ago and that the lights were only operational for less than four months.

Speaking to The Link, the chairperson of Jomo Kenyatta public beach photographers, Paul Mbunza, said that security lights should be repaired to help curb criminal acts.

“This is the only beach open to the public and we regret that criminals are taking advantage of the situation to attack innocent people after the sunset. We have been losing customers because revellers leave as early as six o'clock,” he noted.

According to the photographers, security needs to be beefed up at the beach to deal with emerging cases of insecurity which are a threat to both beach operators and visitors.

Mbunza called on the Ministry of Tourism and the County government to clamp down on crimi-

nal elements who have invaded the beach with the aim of soliciting and harassing tourists.

They also urged the police to intensify patrols in the area to help deal with the declining number of tourists in Kenyans beaches.

He distanced the operators from claims that they are responsible for the diminishing number of tourists and blamed hotel managers for harassing the tourist psychologically.

“The big players in the beach hotels have denied tourists from visiting the beach citing harassment but what message are they sending? This message scare them not to come again, and thus there is need for the concerned bodies to deal with the intruders who are not in any associations operating on the beach front,” noted the chairman who added that the beach has about 11 registered associations which are known to the ministry of tourism.

Similar sentiments were shared by the secretary of the umbrella body of beach operators Misheck Kenyatta who expressed the need to empower operators through their constitution and deal with those who are not registered in any association.

“Our policy is that every man for one job and that is why every category has its own association. There are some people who want to be involved

in all categories and these are the people who belong nowhere. The same persons tend to know about boat rides, has a camera, curios, camels rides among others, these are what we call intruders and should be dealt with,” he said.

Speaking at the sideline of a stakeholders forum organized by Kenya Correspondent Association on devolution, the programme manager of beach operator and livelihood project at Mombasa and coast tourist association, Edward Wangechi, expressed concern over plans by Kilifi and Kwale county governments to remove operators at the beach as they were harassing tourists.

“We have genuine people in the beach who have been earning honestly over the last 30 years. This directive is a blanket condemnation,” she said.

According to Wangechi, beach operators have been recognized by the Ministry of Tourism before the coming of county government, and there was need to align the new bylaws to the existing structures.

He noted that the implementation of the directive poses a threat to over 6,000 jobs for beach operators who depend on business across the coastal line.

## Legislator demands the audit of CDF kitty

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

KANDUYI MP, Wafula Wamunyinyi, wants the Government to audit the local Constituency Development Fund (CDF) accounts.

Wamunyinyi noted with dismay that the constituency books of accounts have not been audited for three consecutive financial years starting from 2010/2011 to 2012/2013.

The CDF allocations during the period under review were spent by the immediate former Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) under the leadership of the then area Mp Alfred Khang'ati.

Speaking to *The Link* in Bungoma town, Wamunyinyi said he was not accusing his predecessor out of mischief but only wanted the auditors to give his team a clean sheet.

“From 2010/2011 to 2012/2013 financial years, the constituency books of accounts have not been audited which is why I am calling on the government to send auditors to give my CDFC a clean bill of health,” he said.

The Mp added that his recently inaugurated CDFC has inherited only Ksh.200,000 from the previ-

ous regime whose right to handle CDF ceased upon the election of the new parliament.

Wamunyinyi regretted that the previous regime continued to make withdrawals from the CDF account during the electioneering period and even after the elections.

The move, Wamunyinyi said has greatly affected needy students in the constituency who rely on bursary to pursue education.

He claimed that bursary and office administration funds were exhausted from the CDF account during the electioneering period.

Consequently the MP appealed to parents and needy students to be patient and wait till the constituency receives CDF allocation for this financial year.

“Needy students will have to wait a little bit longer before they are allocated bursaries due to the prevailing circumstances,” the Mp said.

The MP alleged that the amount which was spent by the previous regime during electioneering period and immediately after the elections was Ksh.58 million.

This was the last tranche of CDF allocation to the constituency during 2012/2013 financial year.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI county assembly recently had a privilege to host the British High Commissioner Christian Turner.

The assembly hosted the envoy for about two hours where members expressed interest in exchange programmes between Britain and Kenya.

The assembly speaker Mwangi Mugo who welcomed Turner in the chambers said it was an honour to host the commissioner in the assembly as the first visitor outside the country.

Mugo said it was good that members from his country also visit the assembly for the exchange programmes.

The speaker however told the envoy not to panic that the assembly has not a single lady but it is because nobody was elected and the

# Nyeri county assembly hosts British envoy

gazettment of the nominated ones is yet to be done.

"We are 30 elected men but not a single woman. We would wish to welcome you here again in future so that we can share experiences

and ideas," said the speaker.

He also said the assembly is faced with many challenges including lack of broadcasting room and a computerized resource centre.

The members were happy to

chair the platform with Turner and even posed for photographs with him. Turner has been in the Mt Kenya region for about three days to familiarize with the projects in the region.



British High Commissioner Christian Turner poses for a photograph with the Nyeri county assembly members at the assembly recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

## Community policing committees urged to stick to mandate

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

NOMINATED Community policing persons in Bungoma County have been advised to resist attempts by chiefs and other State security agents to use them as a vigilante group.

The warning came as it emerged that some chiefs and even the police order members of the community based policing committees to arrest suspected wrongdoers. Teso North District Administration Police (AP) commandant Mr. James Wekesa however cautioned the community based policing members against being used as vigilante.

Wekesa who was the guest speaker at the one day workshop held at Celtrica hotel in Bungoma town was categorical that the work of community based policing members is not to arrest suspects.

He asserted that it was unconstitutional and professional misconduct for chiefs and the police to engage members of the community based policing committees in arresting suspected criminals and brewers of illicit liquor.

Wekesa at the same time called on members of community based policing committees to always remain incognito in the interest of their own security.

Wekesa said that asking community policing members to arrest suspected criminals exposes them to the public, a fact, he pointed out that it was not only unprofessional but also risks their lives.

The AP district boss reminded community based policing members that their work is to inform the police and other State security agents about impending crimes and suspicious persons in communities for appropriate action.

Mr. Albinus Muga, the Bungoma Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) coordinator concurred with the AP commandant that members of the community based policing committees should remain concealed from the public for security reasons.

Efforts by the South Bukusu location chief Mrs. Gladys Wekesa to exonerate chiefs from allegations that they use community based policing members as vigilante groups did not bear fruits.

Community based policing members who attended the workshop were in agreement that chiefs and the police order them to arrest suspects or to accompany them to illicit brew dens for arrests or searches.

"If it is not happening in your area of jurisdiction, it is happening in other areas," one of the participants told the chief. Participants of the workshop sponsored by Bungoma CJPC in partnership with Saferworld were drawn from Kanduyi and Bumula constituencies of Bungoma County.

Other speakers/facilitators at the workshop were Bungoma CJPC coordinator Mr. Albinus Muga and organization social worker Mrs. Caro Maelo.

## Kilifi County banks on KIE to lure investors

By BEKADZO TONDO

KILIFI county government will work closely with the Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE) to attract more investors in the region.

The County Governor Mr. Amason Kingi said his government will make use of the parastatal to lure investors in the region.

Mr Kingi said that despite the fact that the county is endowed with enormous resources including coconut and cashew nuts, there are no factories to process the nuts into finished products.

He said coconut and cashew nuts have potential to generate more income for the region but there are no processing factories to aid in value addition.

"We need to unlock the potential of coconut and cashew nut trees in

Kilifi county and the only way to do this is to have industries and factories which could add value into the raw produce," said Mr Kingi. The governor spoke during the inspection of industrial sheds constructed by KIE at a cost of Ksh60 million.

The Managing Director of KIE Mr Julius Mokogi who led the team said the parastatal seeks to support entrepreneurs with loans and machines to start up their own businesses.

Mr Mokogi said they also train business people on entrepreneurship so that they can prudently manage their businesses.

"As a parastatal, we offer upcoming entrepreneurs with capital in form of machines and cash loans and training," said Mr Mokogi.

Mr Kingi said his government will also regulate the buying and

selling of coconut and cashew nuts in the region to protect farmers from exploitation by middle men. He said the farmers will be coordinated to form cooperatives and have centralized zones where they could gather and sell their produce.

The governor said the county will set up common markets so that farmers are bound by conditions that compel them to sell their produce at lower prices.

"We need to regulate the prices of products like the coconuts, cashew nuts, mangos, oranges among other products so that our farmers can reap high profits from their products" said Mr Kingi.

He said that farmers had for a long time now been exploited by middlemen who determine the buying prices of their products.

The governor said that most of

the middlemen go directly to the farmers to buy the products without giving them an opportunity to decide on prices and said that habit will now come to an end.

"Farmers use a lot of energy, time and money to produce the nuts and thus deserve better returns. It is for this reason that we want to regulate the prices," said Mr Kingi.

Mr Kingi said the farmers could also be advised to sell their produce directly to the factories once they are established for better pay.

He said Kilifi County will be making a lot of money if industries become operational.

"Value addition to our farm produce could enable Kilifi County to get better returns after the sale of the processed goods and that is the direction we are heading to" said Mr Kingi.

# The Link

Enhancing governance for all

## Counties fail to use start up funds

**I**T is inexplicable to note that more than half of the 47 counties did not spend any money allocated for development in the first four months of devolution.

The report by the Controller of Budget that 25 Counties did not spend a single cent of the money allocated by the Transition Authority sends strong signals that something is a miss.

According to the report, counties had Ksh23 billion at their disposal to start operating as semi autonomous units between March and June 2013. The national government allocated Ksh 9.8 billion as grants while counties jointly collected a total of Ksh6.8 billion during the same period. They also received Ksh 2.9 billion from the Transition Authority for infrastructure development, which was shared equally among the 47 Counties each receiving Ksh 61.5 million. Out of the Ksh 2.5 billion allocated by the Transition Authority to the Counties for development, only Ksh 1.3 billion was spent representing a 45 percent absorption rate.

A close scrutiny of the report reveals that most Counties were unable to spend the infrastructure grant advanced to them through the Transition Authority.

It is not enough for the Controller of Budget to blame this on the lack of capacity and the lengthy procurement processes within the limited time in which the counties were expected to use the resources as the consequences and ramification are going to be profound

A reasonable expectation would be to equip the counties with adequate human capacity and appropriate financial systems required to effectively implement prudent financial management.

Perhaps, it may be too much to ask that the Controller of Budget impose punitive measures but for Kenyans to experience dividends of devolution, action must be taken against Counties named as having spent no money on development. They include Baringo, Bomet, Garissa, Homabay and Kiambu. Others are Kisii, Kitui, Kwale, Lamu, Makeni, Marsabit, Meru, Mombasa, Nakuru, Nyandarua, Siaya, Taita Taveta, Tana River, Tharaka Nithi, Turkana, Vihiga, Wajir and West Pokot.



### COMMENTARY

## Kenyans mobilise against taxing the poor

### COMMENT

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

A BILL sponsored by the government and backed by IMF to raise more money to finance a huge budget announced recently seeks to impose value added tax on basic commodities. This has led to angry protests by Kenyans.

Faisal Ngila is one of 17 activists involved in the campaign Kenyans for Tax Justice, speaking out against a new Value Added Tax (VAT) Bill, known popularly as the "Unga tax bill". In trains, buses, football stadiums and community centres, the activists are trying to raise awareness and compile a petition against the Bill.

The Bill seeks to apply a 16 percent value added tax rate on basic commodities that have remained untaxed until now. These include rice, bread, maize flour, processed milk and sanitary pads. When the bill was introduced to parliament in 2012, citizen welfare groups strongly opposed its adoption. But it is now up for debate in parliament.

Many ordinary citizens in Kenya are worried about the bill's impact on their already-meagre incomes. "I am not really working. Sometimes I do casual labour washing dishes and clothes," Julia Njoki, a mother of four, says. "If they add tax to maize, bread and milk, I will not be able to buy anything."

Blessol Gathoni, one of the activists from Kenyans for Tax Justice, says that they are aiming for 20,000 signatures on their petition, which will be presented to members of parliament. So far, around 9,000 people in this East African nation of 42 million have signed it.

"The first issue is to get people to think about how this bill will affect them and if they're moved, they can go ahead and call the number (to add their names to the petition)," she says. "People do not know that they are actually supporting the economy and that they should be demanding their rights."

### VAT and the economy

Value Added Tax was introduced to Kenya in 1990 and since then has been subject to numerous amendments, including the introduction of tax refunds and zero rating on basic articles like food and imports used for manufacturing.

It accounts for 28 percent of total tax revenues in Kenya, second after income tax.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has backed the new VAT bill on the grounds that it will increase the government's sources of revenue.

According to the National Treasury, under the country's current tax regime,

Kenya loses 11 billion shillings (129 million dollars) in revenue and the current VAT structure is "complex, inefficient and unproductive."

The Kenya Revenue Authority's Commissioner for Domestic Taxes Pancrasius N. Nyaga says that the VAT bill as it stands must be overhauled to seal loopholes that may create tax leakages in the economy.

"Zero rating on goods is actually benefiting the manufacturers and not the consumers or the common people," says Nyaga.

"If you look at the Thika road project, you will find that the contractors were granted zero-rated status and purchase commodities without paying VAT. That creates a loophole. If they buy a lot of cement, the government loses VAT and it can be sold on the black market, undercutting genuine traders." Thika road, the main highway in Nairobi, is being expanded from four to eight lanes.

Nyaga adds that those mobilising against the bill are not seeing the overall positive impact on the economy.

"I think the whole issue has been misunderstood and people are trying to gain political mileage out of it. The pricing is not such a big deal. When VAT is spread evenly across all commodities, it will be self-regulating, and prices will not impact negatively on everyone."

But Kwame Owino, chief executive officer at the Institute of Economic Affairs Kenya, a public policy think tank, says that while the VAT bill will create predictability in tax revenue collection, it will also raise the prices of basic goods.

"Its justification is not an increase in tax, but if you are expanding the number of goods to which VAT applies, then it necessarily means that you are increasing taxes," he says.

But in a country where, according to the World Bank, the average person earns 1,700 dollars a year, such price increases may have serious implications for ordinary citizens.

According to Sarah Muyonga, policy and advocacy manager at Tax Justice Network Africa, which supports transparency in international finance, low-income earners are likely to bear the burden of the tax increases.

"I consider it a myth that the rich consume much more than the poor. The

poor consume more regularly in smaller quantities. If a poor person buys a small packet of milk every day, they are paying VAT every day and, in the long run, they end up paying more tax than the rich," she adds, referring to the fact that poor people spend a larger percentage of their income on taxable goods than rich people do.

### Kenya's tax incentives cost billions

The activists mobilising against the VAT bill say they want to use the campaign to highlight the government's hypocrisy in taxing ordinary citizens, while "multi-billion shilling companies" are "given tax breaks and holidays."

Government estimates place Kenya's lost revenue from tax incentives to foreign investors at Ksh 100 billion (1.1 billion dollars).

Tax Justice Network Africa estimates that in 2010 and 2011, the government spent more than twice the country's health budget on providing tax incentives. Kenya's health budget for 2010/2011 was 485 million dollars.

However, a 2006 report by the IMF states that investment incentives and, in particular, tax incentives, are in fact "not an important factor in attracting foreign investment."

Nyaga says the government is looking to overhaul its tax incentive regime. However, he adds, tax incentives have nothing to do with the proposed VAT bill. "With this bill, we are not targeting low-income people at the expense of the large corporations as suggested. We will be addressing all deficiencies in the tax," he says.

However, the international organisation against poverty, The Rules, is not convinced and has said that ongoing talks between the City of London and the Kenyan government are "aimed at modelling Kenya's financial system on the City of London," a "hub of the global tax haven system through which billions in untaxed profits flow every day."

"The Kenyan government has hired the most aggressive financial liberalisers in the world to advise them," Martin Kirk, global campaigns director for The Rules, says.

"So vague promises of overhauling tax incentives sound pretty hollow in the face of evidence. Taxes have to be paid. If some people don't pay, others are forced to. What we're seeing with the Unga tax is an example of that. Tax theft by the rich is costing Kenya billions of shillings every year, so the poorest are being told to pay more to pick up the tab."



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# The Link

Enhancing governance for all

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# British envoy speaks on devolution

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE British Government has urged Kenyans to stop politicising devolution and instead allow the newly created units ample time to take root.

British High Commissioner Christian Turner said that it took ten years for Britain to implement devolution.

"Some of the work involved will need enough time. Kenyans should not be in a hurry. The British government will however support the implementation of the devolution in the country," he said.

The envoy was speaking during an open debate at Nyeri Social Forum offices in Nyeri town.

At the same time, Turner said his British government is worried over the increase of poaching in the country targeting endangered species saying it is leading to economic sabotage.

He was shocked to hear that only seven Northern White Rhinos are left in the world after poachers killed others in the country and urged the local community surrounding those animals to protect them.

"We are supporting tourism,

investment growth in this country. Tackling poaching as a security, economic, legal as well as conservation issue can benefit local communities," he added.

The diplomat has since promised that Britain will support the government's projections on a double digit growth economy.

On the Mau Mau compensation, he said the British government will put up a memorial in Nairobi in six months after the ruling of the court which also offered compensation of Ksh 2.6 billion for the 5, 228 Mau Mau freedom fighters.



British High Commissioner Christian Turner speaks during a debate at Nyeri Social Forum offices in Nyeri town recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

## County officials rescue girl from early marriage

By BEKADZO TONDO

KILIFI County Government has come to the rescue of a 16 year old school girl who had been married off to a 52 year old man.

According to the County Government executive committee member in charge of education and youth affairs, Ms Salma Ahmed, the girl was secretly married off by her parents.

Ms Ahmed told an education stakeholders meeting held at the Kilifi county hall recently that both the parents and the elderly man have been arrested.

The meeting which was convened to discuss education matters in the County was attended by the county education director Mr Dickson Ole Keis and senior officials from the Kilifi county government.

"Members of the lobby group fighting for the rights of the children reported the matter to the governor's office which sprung into action and ordered the arrest of the parents and the old man," said Ms Ahmed.

The executive member lamented that cases of girls dropping out of school due to early marriages were on the rise and vowed to fight and address the problem.

"Girls have a right to access education and as a government we will not tolerate parents who mediate early marriages," said Ms Ahmed.

The county education director Mr Keis cautioned parents against marrying off their underage girls but instead take them to school.

Mr Keis said education was the backbone of development and urged leaders in the education sector to work as a team and ensure children in the area acquire high and quality education.

Cases of girls dropping out of school for early marriages and unwanted pregnancies are common in Kilifi County.

## Bumala residents in dire need of ambulance and market

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE residents of Bumala in Butula Sub-county have urged the government of Busia County to provide Bumala health centre with its own ambulance for emergency purposes instead of relying on one from Busia district hospital.

In a memo addressed to Busia County Transition Authority Coordinator and copied to Busia governor Sospeter Ojiamong, Bumala business community led by Butula residents association chairman Charles Indede said residents seeking emergency medical attention had been forced to look for an alternative means to reach the health centre.

"Bumala health centre has

no ambulance to handle emergency medical cases and this had affected expectant mothers who have to risk their lives due to rising cases of insecurity in the location.

The sick have in most occasions been forced to ask for an ambulance all the way from Busia district hospital," said Indede.

Speaking to *The Link* in Busia town after presenting the memo recently, the residents' association chairman said Bumala market which generates a lot of revenue for the county is in a deplorable state and has no modern stalls and lacks clean water, a situation he noted has forced the traders to rely on private boreholes.

"The traders at the mar-

ket have been forced to rely on untreated water from private boreholes and this has in most occasions led to cholera epidemic," said Indede, adding that Bumala requires drilled water to curb the cholera menace.

The residents further appealed to the county government to allocate funds to aid in the purchase of land for the construction of a bus park saying the current bus park is too small to accommodate PSV vehicles.

"As a growing town within Busia County and being one of the notable revenue generating centres for the county, there is urgent need on the part of the government of Busia to allocate funds to facilitate the es-

tablishment of a social hall," said Indede.

Bumala Business Community acting Vice-chairman Wilfred Oduori on his part expressed concern saying that the traders who operate at Bumala market operate under unhygienic conditions especially during the rains due to lack of shelters, a situation he noted has caused the traders to lose their wares to rain.

"The open air traders have incurred huge losses especially when it is raining because they have nowhere to keep their goods," he said, adding that Bumala town is always dirty due to the fact that there is no proper physical planning and therefore no proper place for both sewage and dumping site.

# Land acquired illegally in Busia County to be repossessed

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Government of Busia County is set to repossess all the public property that might have been acquired illegally, a senior government official has said.

Speaking to The Link in Busia town recently, Busia Deputy Governor Kizito Wangalwa said before the devolved system of government was established, scores of people purporting to be private developers had grabbed public land.

The deputy governor cited two parcels of land that had been earmarked for the establishment of Busia medical training centre and the construction of Busia airstrip which he noted had been grabbed by certain individuals.

"The government had paid the former occupants of a parcel of land that had been set aside for the construction of Busia airstrip, but the same plot has been grabbed by a certain individual. Therefore as a government, we are going to carry out investigations and take the necessary steps if it is true that the said land has been grabbed," said the deputy governor.

He added that retired President Mwai Kibaki visited Busia district hospital way back in 2007 where he presided over a ground-breaking ceremony at the site where Busia medical training centre was supposed to be constructed.

Kizito said the government of Busia County has earmarked a total of Ksh504.7million towards health and sanitation programmes, adding that

effective measures have already been put in place to ensure transparency and accountability.

He at the same time expressed concern over delays in rolling out the construction of the proposed Busia medical training centre six years down the line.

"It is saddening to note that six years down the line, the construction of the proposed Busia medical training centre is yet to take-off even after the ground-breaking ceremony presided over by retired President Kibaki," said Kizito, adding that the government of Busia will do everything at its disposal to ensure the project proceeds as earlier planned.

At the same time irate traders within Busia municipality and its environs accused the Busia branch

Kenya Power and Lighting Company office of failing to curb the frequent power blackouts they say had drastically affected their business.

The traders led by the chairman of Busia County Cross-border traders Steven Obala expressed concern over the frequent power outage.

The most affected were traders dealing with electronic items who claimed that the abrupt power outage has in most occasions ended up burning the fuses of their wares especially televisions sets, radios and computers' central processing units.

The irate traders said the Kenya power has totally failed to realize its mandate adding that it is doing a great disservice to both the traders and the residents who have installed electricity in their premises.

"The KPLC continues to raise the electricity charges, but they have failed to provide effective service delivery," said an irate trader who sought anonymity.

They claimed that whenever they visited local KPLC office to complain over the issue, they are allegedly handled in a very degrading manner with none of the officials caring to explain to them the causes of the blackouts.

"Unless the local KPLC office takes urgent step to address the persistent power outage, Busia County will not grow economically and improve on the living standards of her people," said Obala.

However, efforts by The Link to get comment from the relevant authority over the causes of persistent power outages did not bear fruit.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI Governor Nderitu Gachagua has cautioned institutions of higher learning against grabbing land that belongs to youth polytechnics in the county.

Gachagua said that most of the public universities are yearning for free land to pave way for their expansion programmes adding that they have encroached into the youth polytechnics.

He said his government will deal firmly with any institution of higher learning which plans to grab land belonging to youth polytechnics in the county.

"My government is working closely with the national government to ensure that the management of the polytechnics gets full support," he said.

Gachagua lauded President Uhuru Kenyatta for promising to increase the proportion of public contracts reserved for the youth to help spur job and wealth creation.

Gachagua who was accompanied by Nyeri Education executive member Elijah Nguyo and Nyeri county commissioner Michael Mwangi was speaking recently during the launch of strategic plan of Gachika youth polytechnic in Nyeri County.

The chairperson of the institution's Board Wamuyu Mahinda

## Nyeri governor warns against grabbing of polytechnic land



Nyeri Governor Nderitu Gachagua is welcomed at Gachika Youth Polytechnic during the launching of the institution's strategic plan. On the left is chairperson of the Board Wamuyu Mahinda.  
Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

and area county member of the assembly Baragu Mutahi were also present.

Nguyo urged all the youth polytechnics in the county to come up with their strategic plans and submit them to his office so that the county government can effectively support them.

Governor Gachagua promised to boost the institution with Ksh 0.5 million, saying that Nyeri will soon become a centre of technical education in Kenya.

"In the next five years, other counties will be coming to this county to source for professionals. These polytechnics are not meant for class eight dropouts but for all categories who want to learn practical courses," said Gachagua.

He promised that his government will assist all the polytechnics to explore various commercial ventures.

The governor said that his government will ensure that the enrolment into the polytechnics increase from 3,800 to 10,000 students.

## Women representation in governance structures remains low

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

LIMITED representation of women and youth in decision making structures limit fair inclusion in developmental projects and programs, a university don claims.

Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology lecturer, Dr. Maria Onyango, says that although African women contribute immensely to food security at household level, they have limited access to land ownership.

Dr. Onyango is categorical that in most African communities women have land user right and not ownership right.

She suggests that governance structures should be sensitized to

draw on national commitments to women's rights and gender equality to reverse the trend.

On climate change, Dr. Onyango claims that 70 per cent of natural disasters in the world are weather and climate related adding that their extreme impacts affect women and the youth.

She attributes the scenario to limited women's participation in decisions related to climate change and their access to capacity building before, during and after the disasters.

"Women are often only seen as victims and not as key agents in adaptation plan and disaster relief," she says.

The don observes that low or lack of timely communication of weather and climate early warn-

ing information is a barrier to poverty reduction and climate adaptation.

She notes that there is immediate need to address enhancement of transmitting widely accepted climate weather change information so that women can have access to resources that are essential in disaster preparedness, mitigation and rehabilitation.

Dr. Onyango was speaking at Jumua Guest House in Kisumu during a two day journalists' training workshop on reporting gender and topical issues in the counties.

The training workshop was facilitated by African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWC)

Speaking at the same workshop, AWC executive director, Mr. Arthur Okwemba hinted that as the county governments begin to perform their mandated functions, the media need to be more vibrant and investigative.

Mr. Okwemba observed that county governments may not deliver expected services to residents if the managers are not constantly kept on their toes.

He reminded the 15 journalists drawn from Nyanza and Western regions who attended the workshop that their first allegiance is to the county residents and not the advertisers, wheel dealers, the key county officials or friends.

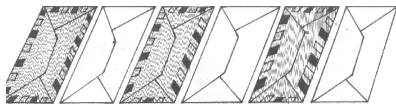
"Putting public interest first enhances your credibility hence

your loyalty should be to county residents," he said.

Okwemba at the same time also challenged journalists to be innovative and think beyond the counties adding that their success, reputation and survival as watchdogs are highly dependent on themselves.

Noting that being independent in mind is key to giving reliable information, Okwemba further reminded the journalists to have a level of moral compass so as to report with accuracy and fairness.

"You have greater responsibility towards the county residents and even the managers of the County. What you write affects the residents and the operation of the county," he said.



### Let our leaders stop the mistrust and unite EA

THE of an East African community was mooted by the founding presidents of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, yet almost four decades later, it is still an idea on paper, gathering dust in some archives somewhere. This lethargy has been informed by greed and mistrust between member states.

The much anticipated strengthening of both cultural, social, political and economic ties remains a mirage we keep seeing but cannot reach. At this point, with Rwanda and Burundi on board, the actualisation of a truly integrated East Africa must be expedited.

Our borders should be viewed only as demarcations, but as things stand today, they are barriers, solid walls that inhibit free movement of goods and people who not only share cultural ties, but also ethnicity. A notable example is the Awori family that gave us a Vice-President in Kenya and an MP in Uganda.

It was, therefore, encouraging to hear President Kenyatta advocate for the opening of borders to encourage free trade among our people. This should be facilitated by the withdrawal of the requirement to have a passport to visit either of the East African countries. President Yoweri Museni of Uganda tried pushing for free boarder movement some years back, but was checked by Kenya's reluctance. If our leaders can pull this off, they will earn a place in history as unifiers, not divisionists African leaders are perceived to be.

**Alexander Chagema,**  
Via e-mail.

### Change method of hiring teachers to reflect modern trends

THE government has done well to set aside funds for teachers recruitment this year. The gesture was welcomed by unemployed graduates, who have waited for far too long for their day of joy.

Unfortunately, the hope of getting employed for many faded for unexplainable reasons. Many applicants were disappointed with how some schools conducted the interviews. A notable misnomer was the score sheet used by the interviewing panel.

In today's world, and especially with increased quest for quality education in developing countries, teachers should be interviewed according to their subject combination as opposed to the usual way of using a similar score sheet for all the subject combinations.

Serious employers look for competent people who can deliver well.

The score sheet that the Teachers Service Commission uses to recruit its staff does not reflect aspects of changing learning environments. I would expect, for instance, that when recruiting a Business Studies teachers, the panel should look at special competencies, which include professional certificates such as CPA, proficiency in computer use and business-related seminars attended by the applicant. Those being interviewed for language positions should equally display a trend of continuous learning by attending workshops and seminars.

**Geoffrey Towet,**  
Via e-mail.

## Let Transport ministry invest in new technology to discipline wayward drivers

DEAR Mr. President, I write his open letter to you with profound anger and pain. I believe I also represent the anger and pain of thousands of people who have lost loved ones on our roads and those that are reading this seated on wheel-chairs or hospital beds having been maimed by reckless matatu drivers.

Sir, a photograph of a beautiful girl aged about five years appeared on the front page of one of the dailies recently. The extreme fear and anguish. The little girl looked worried, not knowing what the scars on her face meant or why they had been inflicted on her. She will probably need years of counselling to recover fully.

The girl was one of the victims of the accident on the morning of August 28 at Ntulele in Narok where 42 lives were lost.

I have a few questions for you Sir. When will our roads stop claiming innocent lives?

When the late John Michuki was Transport minister, he showed us how to create order in the matatu industry. He forced matatus to install speed governors and safety belts and went to matatu termini himself to confirm that they had complied.

Truth be told, our public transport system needs to be over-



The scene of an accident in which five people died at Ebusundi in Vihiga County recently.

hauled completely. The first step is to bring it back under the control of your government. As at now, the industry is controlled by cartels. It is a government unto itself.

Once these cartels have been dismantled, all PSV drivers must be retrained and re-examined within an overhauled curriculum. The current driving training and tests are a joke. The threshold of passing a PSV exam must be significantly higher than that of an ordinary private driver's licence.

In this time and age, technology can solve a lot of our problems. What is so difficult with requiring all PSVs to pay into a central police-managed fleet management

system along the model of what STOIC Ltd is using? All PSVs should be monitored using this type of system. In the event that a vehicle goes out of rudder a red flag would be raised automatically and the vehicle owner sought. The system is able to monitor speed and routes real-time. That is what companies that run big fleets use.

Mr. President, you and your deputy must look for a way of policing themselves. As things stand they have no capacity or will to do this. They supplement their income from taxis, matatus and buses.

**Dr. Fred Mugambi Mwirigi,**  
via e-mail.

### Hypocrisy clouded debate on withdrawal from ICC

KENYA'S biggest hurdles to cohesion and development are negative ethnicity and corruption. No amount of laws and courts will solve our problems because this is not a legal problem but a moral one. Morality is about attitude, which can only be changed through education and not enactment or execution of laws. Laws can deter actions but they cannot change the mind. And since the mind hasn't changed, it will always figure out how to beat the law.

Recently, the debate on Kenya's withdrawal from the Rome Statute revealed how divided Kenya is. Each side accused the other of hypocrisy. And they were right because in a sense each side was hypocritical. CORD knew that justice for victims would not necessarily be served by having three people prosecuted, out of the thousands who were involved. The real justice that the victims need is to have their lives put on course and shielded from violence in the future.

Even if we assume that President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy bear the greatest responsibility, their prosecution is likely to escalate animosity rather than mitigate it because their cases are not just about law. Their cases also have a political dimension, which can only be addressed politically.

Jubilee is pretending that their support for the ICC a couple of years ago was well-intentioned. On the contrary, they were hell-bent on shielding the alleged perpetrators of violence from possible punishment, with little concern for the victims. Jubilee should not act as if this is an emergency. I am not a friend of ICC because I know it's a political court in the hands of global powers. I would support withdrawal from ICC, but not before the cases of Kenyans in ICC are heard and determined.

In my view, with or without ICC our problems remain. African must source homegrown solutions. Any illusions that our political and economical slation comes from the West is ill-informed and naive.

**LIS Mwenda,**  
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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# Burumba residents irked by stalled dispensary

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE residents of Burumba village in Matayos Sub-county have appealed to the government of Busia County to allocate funds to facilitate the completion of a community dispensary that has stalled.

The residents interviewed by The Link during a spot check carried out recently, claimed the project that was initiated by the Nambale Constituency development Fund kitty six years ago and has swallowed close to Ksh10million stalled due to lack of transparency and accountability.

"It is sad to note that six years down the line, the project we had unanimously proposed during project identification forum to Nambale CDF committee for funding is yet to be completed although a colossal amount of cash had been approved and released to the committee concerned," said a source on condition of anonymity. According to the plan, apart from the construction of the community dispensary, a residential quarter for nurses and doctors, houses for security officers were also supposed to be constructed but the same is nowhere to be seen.

## County directs miners to rehabilitate quarries or risk losing licenses

By BEKADZO TONDO

EXCAVATORS of coral blocks in Kilifi County will now be required to rehabilitate their used quarries or have their licenses revoked.

The Governor Amason Kingi said that excavators of coral blocks must rehabilitate the used quarries to stop the cancellation of their licences.

"Rehabilitation of the used quarries should be one of the core activities of those who engage in the excavation of coral blocks and sand harvesting quarries," said Mr Kingi when he toured quarries in Zowerani area of Tezo location.

He directed the officers from the National Environment Management Authority in Kiliifi to inspect the quarries and come up with a list of companies that fail to rehabilitate the exhausted quarries," said Mr Kingi.

He said conservation of the environment was very important adding that rehabilitation should entail the planting of trees to conserve the environment.

The governor at the same time urged investors operating in the county to ensure that locals get 75 percent of the job opportunities.

Mr Kingi noted with concern that most firms have failed to employ local people and instead offered jobs to people from other regions.

"The constitution demands that investors offer 75 percent of job opportunities in their companies to local people and that law has to be followed to the later," said Mr Kingi.

He said that he had received numerous complaints from residents that most firms operating coral blocks and sand harvesting quarries have been employing foreigners adding that the trend must come to an end.

"The county government has an obligation to create job opportunities to the local people and will rely on investors to fulfil this mandate," said Mr Kingi.

The stalled health facility had been meant to serve the residents of Burumba and Mundulusia villages which are very far from Busia district hospital.

"The health facility was also supposed to have a maternity wing to cater for expectant mothers who had initially been compelled to deliver at the Busia district hospital approximately seven kilometers away," said an expectant mother.

However, Burumba County representative Tony Onyango

Opondo has assured the residents of Burumba and Mundulusia villages that the government of Busia County has set aside a total of Ksh500million towards health and sanitation. He at the same time said his first priority is to push for funds to construct the stalled community dispensary whose completion he noted was long overdue.

"We will not allow this noble community project to become a white elephant. I will form a

project management committee whose mandate would be to ensure its speedy completion so that the local community can benefit from the same," said the county representative.

He added that he will also put in place a monitoring and evaluation committee that will ensure all the proposed projects are properly done to the satisfaction of the beneficiaries before payment is made in order to avoid substandard work.



Front elevation of stalled, bushy Burumba dispensary. Photo/Gilbert Ochieng'

# Poverty reduction eludes Kenya as MDG deadline approaches

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

IF the first budget of the Jubilee government is anything to go by, Kenya will take longer than programmed to achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number one, let alone its manifesto.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which provide a framework for social development among other issues are a culmination of several international conferences held in the 1990s.

In the year 2000, a record of 189 member States of the United Nations, Kenya included pledged to achieve 8 MDGs top on the agenda being to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

They undertook to advance a global vision for improving the condition of humanity throughout the world in the areas of development and poverty eradication by:

- Reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day,
- Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all people,
- Reducing by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

A cursory look at the Jubilee budget reveals that Kenya may not be able to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger as pledged.

The Jubilee budget appears to be less sensitive to social protection of older members of society and food security because the stipend programme and agriculture do not have adequate budgetary allocations.

Stipend programme and food production should be enhanced through adequate funding in order for the government to achieve national poverty eradication plan and national food policy so as to improve the status of Kenyans.

In Kenya, more than 56 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, a good percentage of these being people with disability.

Kenya ranks 128 out of 169 in the United Nations human development index, with more than half of the citizens being unable to meet their daily basic requirements.

To cushion these people from extreme poverty and hunger, the Jubilee government should have allocated adequate funds to cover majority of older people and people living with disabilities.

The cabinet secretary for national treasury, Mr. Henry Rotich, allocated Ksh.13.4 billion to the cash transfer programme.

Out of the amount, only 3.2 billion will go towards cushioning the older citizens while Ksh.8 billion will go to the orphans and vulner-

able children.

Older citizens who are earmarked to benefit from the ksh.3.2 billion during this financial year are 118,000, thus double last year's number of 59,000 people.

The number of beneficiaries although doubled is a drop in the ocean given that the population of people aged 65 years and above in Kenya according to 2009 census is 1,332,472.

The meagre allocation contradicts Jubilee's own manifesto which says that the government will increase the reach of cash transfers to attain universal coverage for older persons and persons with disabilities.

"The Jubilee coalition is committed to eradicating poverty in Kenya, no one in a country as rich as ours should have to go without food, shelter or healthcare," the manifesto reads in part.

Article 57 of the constitution of Kenya also states that the State shall take measures to ensure that older persons live in dignity and receive reasonable care and assistance from their family and the State.

There is therefore need to lobby for the implementation of international agreements and clauses in the constitution aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger.

# Mau Mau children in fresh demand for compensation

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

CHILDREN of former Mau Mau freedom fighters from Central region are now demanding a kilogramme of gold each over the atrocities meted out on them under the colonial government.

The sons and daughters under the umbrella of Mau Mau Foundation said in Nyeri town that they want a kilogramme of gold each, for the period running from 1885 to 1963.

This is a fresh demand to the British government after the UK government disbursed Ksh 2.6 billion to compensate Mau Mau fighters.

They said the compensation should be back dated to the year of 1885 when the former colonial masters made Kenya a colonial protectorate, claiming that since then many Kenyans were tortured.

Speaking to the media at a Nyeri hotel, the secretary to the foundation Michael King'ori said they are still languishing in poverty because of the inequalities entrenched by the colonial government.

"We want the British Government to deposit gold with local banks to compensate us. The demand for gold as compensation is informed by the fact that money attracts numerous processes making it vulnerable to fraudsters," King'ori said.

The members also claimed that the immediate former Government of President Mwai Kibaki denied them land at the expansive Solio Ranch that was meant for those who liberated the nation from colonial masters.

Meanwhile, pensioners in the country have called for a review of their retirement benefits saying that they should reflect the state of the economy.

Led by the national coordinator of the Kenya Association of Retired Officers (KARO) Nduhiu Njama, the retirees lamented that majority of them were living in deplorable conditions as paupers yet they served the country diligently and now want their benefits adjusted upwards to match the rising inflation.

"The association had approached the Salaries and Remuneration Commission seeking to have it reviewed upwards as it has remained stagnant for many years," Njama said.

He was speaking recently at Kiambu trading centre in Tetu District Nyeri County during the unveiling of a plaque of Ksh. 3 million poultry project by retirees from the area.

"Majority of the pensioners earn a paltry Ksh 5, 000 a month as retirement benefits. This is too little to sustain a decent living," he said.

Njama added that the association had embarked on a nationwide recruitment and sensitization of the retirees, whom he noted stood at over 100,000 in the country, so that they could speak in one voice in their clamour for better pension.

George Githae, who is also an official of KARO in the area, challenged retirees in other parts of the country to start income generating projects as groups and improve on their lifestyles in old age.

Area deputy county commissioner Herman Shambi who was the chief guest during the function lauded the move by the retirees to start an income generating project to improve on their livelihoods saying the move would also challenge local youth come together in groups and emulate the retirees in venturing into similar projects.

## IFC partners with AAR to improve Health Care in E.A

By NANJALA WAFULA

AAR has partnered with International Finance Corporation (IFC) to expand quality healthcare across Africa.

The initiative which is set to cost Ksh 4 million aims at enabling AAR to provide quality health care services and expand its operations in order to reach a large number of people. Countries slated to benefit as AAR expands its outpatient network and enhance their in-patient facilities include Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The key objectives of the partnership will be to expand the scope of AAR and support the cause by providing quality health care to everyone without restriction.

"In 2011, AAR made a strategic decision and two companies were born, the AAR health care and AAR insurance. By IFC investing in us as an organization it is a statement of confidence in what we do," explained Mr. Mark Achola, the Managing Director of AAR.

He said that currently 2500 outpatient have been accessing the Karen health centre, which is a remarkable number since they had not sensitized the public about their existence.

Though in the past only members were allowed to access treatment in all AAR facilities, medical services will now be open to everyone. About 21% of the patients we receive are non-AAR members, the healthcare runs as a separate entity and will operate like any other hospital, including serving members of other insurance companies who are not from AAR insurance" Mr. Achola explained. The company currently has 28 clinics across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and serving over 500,000 outpatients annually. The funds will be used to ensure over 600,000 outpatient are served annually by 2018.

According to the chairman of AAR, healthcare, Dr. Frank Njenga, measures have been put in place to ensure that the establishment of secondary care hospitals across the region will bring quality health care to the people.

Oumar Seydi, IFC Director for East and Southern Africa said, "IFC support to AAR is to enable them reach their goal of becoming the first integrated healthcare provider in East Africa. This will lead to competition hence providing low cost medical services."

IFC has invested in 150 projects in health care in 50 countries across Africa and the partnership hopes to extend health care in East Africa at affordable rate. "Through this investment, IFC aims to improve standards of quality and efficiency in healthcare and facilitate the international exchange of best practice hence creating jobs for skilled professionals," Mr. Oumar emphasized.

# Kenya signs agreement worth Ksh425bn with China

By PETER MUTUKU

KENYA has signed agreements worth KShs425 billion.

Some \$4 billion covered economic partnerships, wildlife protection, and the standard gauge railway linking the port of Mombasa and the border town of Malaba, which President Uhuru Kenyatta said would provide better access to markets to goods from Kenya as well as Uganda Rwanda, Burundi and eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Another \$1 billion was for energy-related projects.

The agreements were a massive boost to the Jubilee Government,

which has pledged to improve the lives of ordinary Kenyans through better service delivery that is underpinned by increased investments in all sectors of the economy.

"These agreements deepen our practical cooperation," President Xi told President Kenyatta shortly before the agreements were signed. "China supports Kenya's quest for industrialization."

President Xi said China was also exploring other areas of investment, including in agribusiness, irrigation, fertilizer production and purchases, and technology.

President Xi said China would

also support Kenya's plans to host a clearing house for the Chinese currency in Nairobi – greatly boosting the Kenyan capitals credentials as a leading financial hub.

"We welcome the investment in key sectors of our economy. The rail link, particularly, is important in the context of East Africa's shared goal of ensuring quicker movement of peoples, goods and services," President Kenyatta said.

Presidents Xi and Kenyatta pledged to increase contact between China's ruling party and Kenya's ruling Jubilee coalition. They agreed that party-to-party contact was essential to bolster political and economic partnerships.



Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta met with Chinese President Xi Jinping recently during his first state visit to China. The two leaders signed an agreement worth KShs425 billion.

## Busia stakeholders raise concern over land grabbing menace

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

VARIOUS stakeholders from Busia County have raised concern over the rampant cases of land grabbing in the region.

Addressing a one day stakeholders forum at a Busia hotel recently, the coordinator of the Kenya Land Alliance in Western region Thomas Mango said that some of the institutions that have lost land to private developers include the Busia district hospital and Busia airstrip.

Mango who is also the coordinator of the Busia Community Development (Bucodev) said there was urgent need for the county government to do everything at its disposal to ensure that all the public land that has been grabbed is returned to the owners.

The regional coordinator at the same expressed concern saying that Busia County still has no land adjudication officers.

He said 70percent of land owners in Bunyala have been forced to commute all the way to Siaya County because all the land records for the area are still in Siaya, a situation he noted has caused a lot of suffering to the people of Bunyala as majority of them are unable to meet the high cost of transportation.

"It is even more sad to note that 70percent of learning institutions in Busia County still have no title deeds," said Mango.

The director of Rural Empowerment and Education Programme (REEP) Mary Makokha on her part said the key issues that have led to the violation of land rights are cultural beliefs and perception, high illiteracy levels especially among women, high level of corruption among officers involved in land issues and poverty.

She also noted with concern that greed has caused majority of parents in Busia County especially those from Butula to sell all the land leaving their families with nowhere to carry out farming.

"The older generation has also refused to relinquish ownership rights to the younger generation," said the director.

## Legislator warns residents against leasing out land to mining companies

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE MP for Ganze, Peter Shehe, has cautioned residents against leasing out land to mining companies which have perfected the art of exploitation at the expense of development.

The MP said most people in the area had leased their land to private companies to explore minerals such as iron ore, manganese and other products in shady deals that only favour the investors.

Mr Shehe blamed the local land control boards and tribunals of failing to discourage the practice which had served to impoverish the community.

He further said most compa-

nies only excavate the minerals and abandon degraded sites without rehabilitation, thus posing huge risks to the residents.

"We have been treated to shocking scenes of quarries abandoned after the exploration of the mineral deposits which are a risk to the local people as most mining companies never rehabilitate the sites," said Mr Shehe.

The MP said though the miners reap huge profits from the minerals, they have failed to repair feeder roads in the area or participate in development projects such as schools and health centers.

Kilifi county governor Mr

Amason Kingi said that his government will regulate the mining processes to ensure that the county benefits from the resources.

"It is unfortunate that local residents remain poor as investors reap highly from resources found in their land," said Mr Kingi.

A survey by The Link established that although mineral deposits such as iron ore, manganese and other valuable stones have been discovered in some parts of Ganze constituency, residents live in squalid conditions after having leased out their land at throw away prices' said Mr Shehe.

However the Kilifi County Commissioner Mr Erastus Eki-

dor defended the land control boards against accusations that they were colluding with prospective miners to lease land from unsuspecting residents.

"It is false to claim that land control boards have been forcing local residents to lease their land to the mineral mining firms after the discovery of the deposits," said Mr Eki-dor.

Mr Eki-dor however admitted that government officers have an obligation to assist the locals with information before they agree to lease their land.

The county commissioner however said the government has no clear policies on minerals exploration in this country, something which has made it

difficult for the officers to advise the people on what they are required to do.

Mr Eki-dor said the government though the ministry of mining was currently formulating laws which will govern the exploration of minerals in the country.

"Currently the ministry of mining headed by Cabinet Secretary Mr. Najib Balala is formulating policies to guide in the exploration of minerals especially on privately owned land," said Mr Eki-dor.

He said that the government will repossess privately owned land where huge deposits of minerals like gold, diamond and oil are discovered.

# Secret land deals foment conflict in Kilifi County

By BEKADZO TONDO

A ROW is simmering between farmers in Tana River, Kilifi, Kwale and Taita Taveta counties and the pastoralist community over secret deals on pasture land.

Recently, members of Ndigiria group ranch in Ganze District of Kilifi County differed on whether or not to allow herders to continue grazing their animals on the 3000 acres of land.

This followed revelations that a section of the ranch owners had secretly leased out the area to the herders without consent from other community members.

A section of the group converged at Ndigiria chief's camp to protest against the move saying that the matter could degenerate into conflict if left unresolved.

However, the group behind the scam defended the move, arguing that

the herders should be left in the ranch and allowed to use the Ndigiria water pan provided there was an agreement on the same stipulating the grazing period and the amount of money they would pay them per year.

The meeting which was chaired by the Assistant County Commissioner for Bamba division Mr Stephen Kaloki had been convened to build peace after the community failed to agree who among them had received payments and given the Somali herders a go ahead.

Kilifi County assembly deputy speaker Mr Teddy Mwambire who is also the area ward representative and the county executive committee member in charge of land, energy, housing and physical planning Mr John Mazuri accompanied the commissioner.

According to the residents, the first Somali herder identified as Mr. Mohamed Salat, arrived in the area in

the year 2011 and agreed to pay the 42 families who own the ranch Ksh 360,000 per year for grazing his livestock and using the Ndigira water pan.

However they claimed they got shocked when they discovered that another herder identified as Mr Daud Narst had been sneaked into the ranch over the past three months after he allegedly colluded with a few of the community members without their consent.

Sources said the two herders nearly clashed at the grazing ground recently after the Mr Narsty accused his colleague of having taken sides with a section of the community to have him kicked out of the area.

The chairman of the ranch Mr Charo Mdzomba who was present at the meeting confirmed that the 42 families who own the ranch land had agreed to allow Mr Salat herd and water his animals on their land.

"When Mr. Salat arrived here, we held a consultative meeting and agreed to allow him to graze and use the water point but the problem started when the other herder came in three months ago and started grazing his animals without our consent," said Mr Mdzomba.

Mr Mramba Mweni who is a member of the ranch the community now wants the herders removed from the area as they were a security threat.

Mr Mweni narrated how people were killed, women and girls raped by suspected bandits about 15 years ago after the Somali herders invaded the area to graze their animals.

"The painful memories of the grisly attacks coordinated by suspected bandits 15 years ago are still fresh in our minds and we fear that if these herders are allowed in the area the same thing is likely to happen," said Mr Mdzomba.

Addressing the community, the county lands official Mr Mazuri promised that the county government in collaboration with the central government will resolve the matter in three months.

"This is a sensitive issue and I promise that the county government in collaboration with the central government and the community will work together to see how best the conflict can be addressed" said Mr Mazuri.

## County lists tourism among key sectors to boost its revenue base

By BEKADZO TONDO

KILIFI County Government is going to use Dakacha wood land zone in Magarini as a tourist attraction site to enhance its revenue base.

According to Mr Kiringi Mwachitu who is the county executive committee member in charge of Environment, Dakacha wood land is the only place in Africa where the rare birds can be found.

Speaking at Titanic hotel in Kilifi during a meeting to discuss means of promoting tourism sites at the international market, Mr Mwachitu said the birds after breeding at the wood land later migrate to Arabuko Sokoke forest in the same county.

The meeting was convened by Showbiz Info limited, an East African entertainment company which has partnered with the county government to promote local tourism.

Mr Mwachitu said his department will liaise with the Ministry of Tourism to ensure the area is well conserved to protect the rare birds for tourist attraction.

"Clerk waiver birds are rare bird species only found in the country at Dakacha wood land in Magarini constituency and as a county government we can readily make use of the breeding zones as a tourist attraction center," said Mr Mwachitu.

The Managing Director of Showbiz Info Limited Mr John Katana said they will also host a series of beauty contests in the area to attract tourists in the area.

Mr Katana said the beauty contest dubbed Miss Tourism Kenya Kilifi County will seek to promote tourism, environmental conservation and cultural diversity.

Dakacha wood land was rich in history and apart from the rare bird species, the colonial freedom fighter Mekatilwa Menza is buried there.

He also said the area holds the remains of the Mijikenda Shingwaya kaya elders.

Mr Mwachitu said that this is an important site which the county government must not only protect and conserve for historical reasons but also utilise to boost its revenue base.

# Controversy mars ADB funded projects in Trans Mara

By MALACHI MOTANO

A STAGGERING Kshs.3.5 billion set aside for the improvement of dilapidated health facilities in Trans Mara District by the Africa Development Fund (ADF) cannot be accounted for.

Most facilities earmarked for construction under the multi-billion shilling Rural Health Project III have stalled. The project was a joint partnership between ADB, Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Kenya government.

Trans Mara received the lion's share to rehabilitate, upgrade and expand 18 health centres and dispensaries. Residents and leaders are now up in arms over the slow pace and the quality of work done by the contractors. The local committees that were initially roped into the project as part of the implementing team have cried foul over exclusion by the project's contractors and consultants.

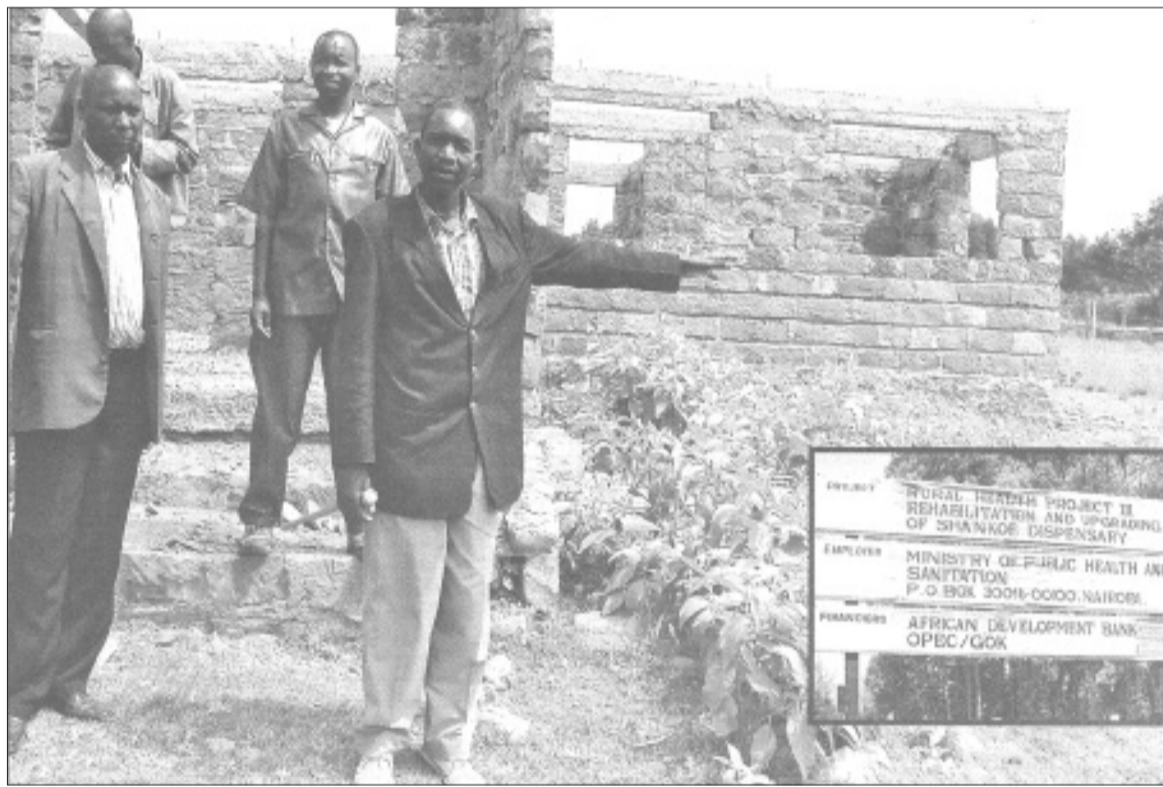
A spot-check by The Link revealed that most of the facilities lack roofing while others are still on the foundation stage. Some of the buildings are in deplorable shape and may never be used while others have been vandalized since there was no security to guard them.

According to David ole Nankoris, chairman of Shankoe dispensary, the construction materials have been vandalized after they were abandoned at the site for several months.

Mr. Nankoris said as a committee, they were forced at one time to contribute Kshs.6,600 to pay workers who were constructing the facility after the contractor disappeared for several months.

"We were forced to part with our money because the irate workers wanted to sell the construction materials to get their pay," said Mr. Nankoris.

He said the contractor has never appeared at the site for close to one year now and they are never informed or consulted anytime he makes appearances. "We have only spotted them in a few incidences during which they make some rounds in



**Oleroko Dispensary with incomplete roof, which was recently blown off by wind. Inset: Project's signpost, which doesn't indicate the contractors or project supervisor.**

the area and leave in the same manner they came," said Simon ole Semeyoi.

Kilgoris MP Gideon Konchellah wants the government to compel the contractors to explain the reason behind such unwarranted delay.

Konchellah said it was sad that the funding disbursed as loans by donors did go towards the intended purposes.

"The government should make an effort of contacting the donors and find out what is happening because, we cannot stand this situation anymore," said Konchellah.

They officials from the ministry of Health have also joined the fray in criticizing the implementation of the projects claiming that they had been sidelined in the whole process and they had no say in the matter.

The area District Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Aggrey Ouko, said as the officer-in-charge, they have no role to play in the project since eve-

rything was being done at the ADB headquarters in Tunis, Tunisia.

"We have tried on several occasions to ask about the progress of the projects but we have been told to keep off until such a time when the project will be handed over officially by the consultants," said Ouko.

He said as government officials on the ground, they have shouldered the blame as residents always question them over the stalled projects.

"It is a big challenge for us as the government representatives to answer some of the questions residents raise concerning these projects because we have little to tell them since we are not part of the implementing team," noted Ouko.

They medic said they were only aware that the Bill Quantities (BQs) for the projects was slashed down from the initial proposed figures and that their attempts to get information on the approved figures have been

futile.

He said the 18 projects were split into three clusters of six facilities with each cluster getting Kshs.66 million.

"As clients of these projects, our hands are tied because we have not been given any role to play and we are only waiting to be handed over these facilities. But, we must also say the work has dragged for long besides the wanting quality," added Ouko.

An effort to get response from Rural Health Project Phase II manager one, Mr. Waititu, was not fruitful.

It is not clear why the government has minimum role in such projects yet records indicate that the government besides being the borrower was contributing Kshs.395 million of the Kshs.3.5 billion for the seven districts, which were being funded.

Other districts which secured the funding included, Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu, Kajiado, Tharaka, Nyandarua and Kirinyaga.

# MPs retain powers in CDF management

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

MEMBERS of Parliament (MPs) will still continue to wield immense powers in the management of Constituency Development Fund (CDF)

This follows the amendment of the law which strips the Fund Manager of powers to act as the secretary to the CDF committee because that position made him a “superpower”.

The Fund Manager is the officer sent to the constituencies to keep an eye on the money on behalf of the national government.

In current financial year, all the 290 constituencies will share Kshs.20.9 billion.

The amendments that were hastily made before the national assembly went on recess, also gave the MPs a freehand to employ “as many people as the money allows” to do menial jobs more so when it comes to specific CDF projects.

The chair of the parliamentary CDF committee Moses Lessonet (MP for Eldama Ravine) moved the amendments in a plot to lock out county governments from the kitty. He also said the Fund Manager had no business having the three roles.

“He has the authority to incur expenditure; he is also the mandatory signatory, plus he is also the secretary to the CDF committee. We cannot allow that. Let him stay with two roles,” Lessonet told The Link a day after MPs approved the changes.

“Because he is the one writing minutes, he needs just two people to withdraw money after he doctors the minutes to reflect whatever mischief they want to perform. We need to spread the control.”

That means the Fund Manager will just have very little

say on what goes on in the CDF projects.

It was a rare show of legislative unity as the MPs quietly published the CDF (amendment) Bill recently and tabled it four days later – without the constitutional requirement of public participation in lawmaking.

On the same day that it was read the first time – ten days before it reached legislative maturity – it was debated, amended and approved. That was record time.

It was one way in the House: Mr. Lessonet proposed the amendments; the matter would be put to a vote by the presiding chair Tom Kajwang’ (Ruaraka)

and the MPs just shouted “aye”. It took less than 20 minutes.

The move raises eyebrows about the motive considering the bulk of the amendments were made to give them absolute control over the money in the constituencies.

Other Bills, such as the VAT Bill, have been in the House for over a month, but were only approved recently and again at night after intense lobbying by the Government.

Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma also joined the amendments with a call to have three-quarters of the CDF money shared equally, and the remaining quarter based on the poverty index.

The amendment to remove the cap on a maximum of five employees under the CDF committee means MPs can employ as many people as possible to do their job.

Six per cent of those allocations to the constituencies – between Kshs.2.5 million and Kshs.10 million per constituency – in the current financial year will be spent on administrative and operating costs.

Mr. Davis Adieno, a manager with Development Initiative, and who has been auditing CDF spending, said the watering down of the powers of the Fund Manager was meant to give the lawmakers a tighter stranglehold on the money.



Members of Parliament in session.

Photo/File

## Busia County Govt to spend Ksh4.5m to promote tourism

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUSIA County government in collaboration with African Aviation College, Airtel and Eco Bank will spend a total of Ksh4.5million to organize Miss Tourism Kenya 2013.

While unveiling the first Miss Tourism Kenya 2013 in Busia County at a Busia hotel recently, Busia governor Sospeter Ojaamong said tourism being a major contributor to the country’s Gross Domestic Product has an important knock-on effect in socio-economic activities such as environment, transport, agriculture, security, telecommunication, information and energy sectors.

He said the event will contribute greatly to employment creation right from top executives to mama mboga in all the 47 counties.

Ojaamong at the same time said majority of the youth in the county had initially not been accorded the opportunity to showcase their talent adding that this time they stand to benefit a great deal from the event.

Ojaamong who was accompanied by the head of Trade, Tourism and Cooperative Societies Henry Makhulu said Busia County government has earmarked a total of Ksh100million for the construction of museums in Teso North and Bumbe beach in Samia sub-county in order to attract tourists.

Makhulu on his part said Busia County will benefit a lot from Miss Tourism Kenya 2013 event in that it will pick the necessary delegates to help in the promotion of conservation of the environment nationwide, enhancing forest cover, and sensitizing local communities on the need to plant trees, especially on the river banks.

The head of trade at the same time said Busia County will have the platform to utilize the event to pursue its forest policy agenda through publicity, promotion activities and community mobilizations, especially on forest management.

“The event will give Busia County the opportunity to participate in the tree planting award schemes that will encourage farmers to preserve the environment. The beauty pageant will make Busia become a tourist destination by marketing the rich environment and game parks,” said Makhulu, adding that it will also enhance the county’s rich cultural diversity and abundant natural resources.

Miss Tourism Kenya 2013 Busia County organizer Ignatius Khalende on his part called upon the participants in the beauty pageant to display high competitiveness and talent during the show in order to showcase and market their talent.

# Governor keen on reclaiming grabbed public land

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

BUNGOMA County Governor, Kenneth Lusaka has challenged his cabinet to prioritize repossession of grabbed public utility land in the county.

Speaking recently during the swearing in ceremony of the ten cabinet secretaries Lusaka, underscored the importance of repossessing grabbed public land saying no tangible development can take place within the county without land.

He called upon the inaugurated county executive committee members to move with speed and repossess all grabbed public land particularly in Bungoma town, the headquarters of the county.

The Governor expressed confidence in the committee saying

all the members have the requisite credentials for the tasks placed on their shoulders.

Lusaka, as a result appealed to Bungoma county residents to give the team the necessary support so that it can deliver to their expectations.

“These men and women you see here today have got what it takes to perform and deliver services to your satisfaction,” Lusaka told residents who attended the swearing in ceremony.

The Governor at the same time took the opportunity to thank members of the county assembly for approving all the people he had nominated.

Lusaka admitted that community and cultural diversity of the county is not reflected in the executive committee as required by law.

He said that it was not possible to have every community on board because the constitution provides for only ten positions whereas ethnic groups and special interest groups are many.

However, the governor promised to give first priority to groups that are not represented in the executive committee in the subsequent appointments.

The constitution (Article 179) has provided for a county executive committee in the devolved system. This committee is the cabinet of the county government.

It is headed by the county governor who also appoints its members. The members appointed by the governor must be vetted by residents of the county and approved by the county assembly.

The maximum number of the executive committee is 12 including the governor and his deputy.

Functions of the county executive committee are spelled out in Article 183 of the constitution of Kenya, 2010.

Several acres of public utility land in Bungoma municipality were grabbed by prominent personalities during the Moi regime.

About seven acres of land belonging to Bungoma district hospital had been grabbed but have since been repossessed through the efforts of Kanduyi Mp Wafula Wamunyinyi.

Some parts of Bungoma show ground and Bungoma Airstrip were also grabbed by private developers during the KANU regime.

# Basic Educat

Achieving universal primary education still remains a challenge in the country owing to the number of out of school children. In addition there are daunting challenges beyond the basic level where a combination of low enrolment, low quality, and lack of relevance means the majority are leaving school without the skills they really need for work and life. However, the scenario is likely to change with the enactment of Basic Education Act, which seeks to streamline the sector and enhance quality, relevance and access to basic education

## Provision of basic education is to be guided by the following values and principles-

- (a) the right of every child to free and compulsory basic education;
- (b) equitable access for the youth to basic education and equal access to education or institutions;
- (c) promotion of quality and relevance;
- (d) accountability and democratic decision making within the institutions of basic education;
- (e) protection of every child against discrimination within or by an education department or education or institution on any

- (f) ground whatsoever; protection of the right of every child in a public school to equal standards of education including the medium of instructions used in schools for all children of the same educational level
- (g) advancement and protection of every child in pre-primary and lower primary level of education to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable;
- (h) encouraging independent and critical thinking; and cultivating skills, disciplines and capacities for reconstruction and development;
- (i) promotion of peace, integration, cohesion, tolerance, and inclusion as an objective in the provision of basic education;
- (j) elimination of hate speech and tribalism through instructions that promote the proper appreciation of ethnic diversity and culture in society;
- (k) imparting relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to learners to foster the spirit and sense of patriotism,

*With less than two years to go before the deadline to meet the Millennium Development Goals for Universal Primary Education for All, Kenya is still grappling with low retention and transition rates. Although the Constitution (Article 43 (1)) provides that every person has the right to education and Article 53 affirms that every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education, the reality on the ground is a far cry from the principles espoused in the supreme law. The enactment of Basic Education is thus a step the right direction. Writes LINK CORRESPONDENT*

- (l) nationhood, unity of purpose, togetherness, and respect;
- (m) transparency and cost effective use of educational resources and sustainable implementation of educational services;
- (n) ensuring human dignity and integrity of persons engaged in the management of basic education;
- (o) promoting the respect for the right of the child's opinion in matters that affect the child;
- (p) elimination of gender discrimination, corporal punishment or any form of cruel and inhuman treatment or torture;
- (q) promoting the protection of the right of the child to protection, participation,
- (r) development and survival;
- (s) promotion of innovativeness, inventiveness, creativity, technology transfer and an entrepreneurial culture;
- (t) non-discrimination, encouragement and protection of the marginalised, persons with disabilities and those with special needs;
- (u) enhancement of co-operation, consultation and collaboration among the Cabinet Secretary, Teachers Service Commission, the National Education Board, the County Education Boards, the education and training institutions and other related stakeholders on matters related to education; and
- (v) provision of appropriate human resource, funds, equipment, infrastructure and related resources that meet the needs of every child in basic education.

The Act also establishes both the National and County Education Boards.

The National Education Board has been vested with powers to advise the Cabinet Secretary, the department of education and related departments on policy matters in respect to—

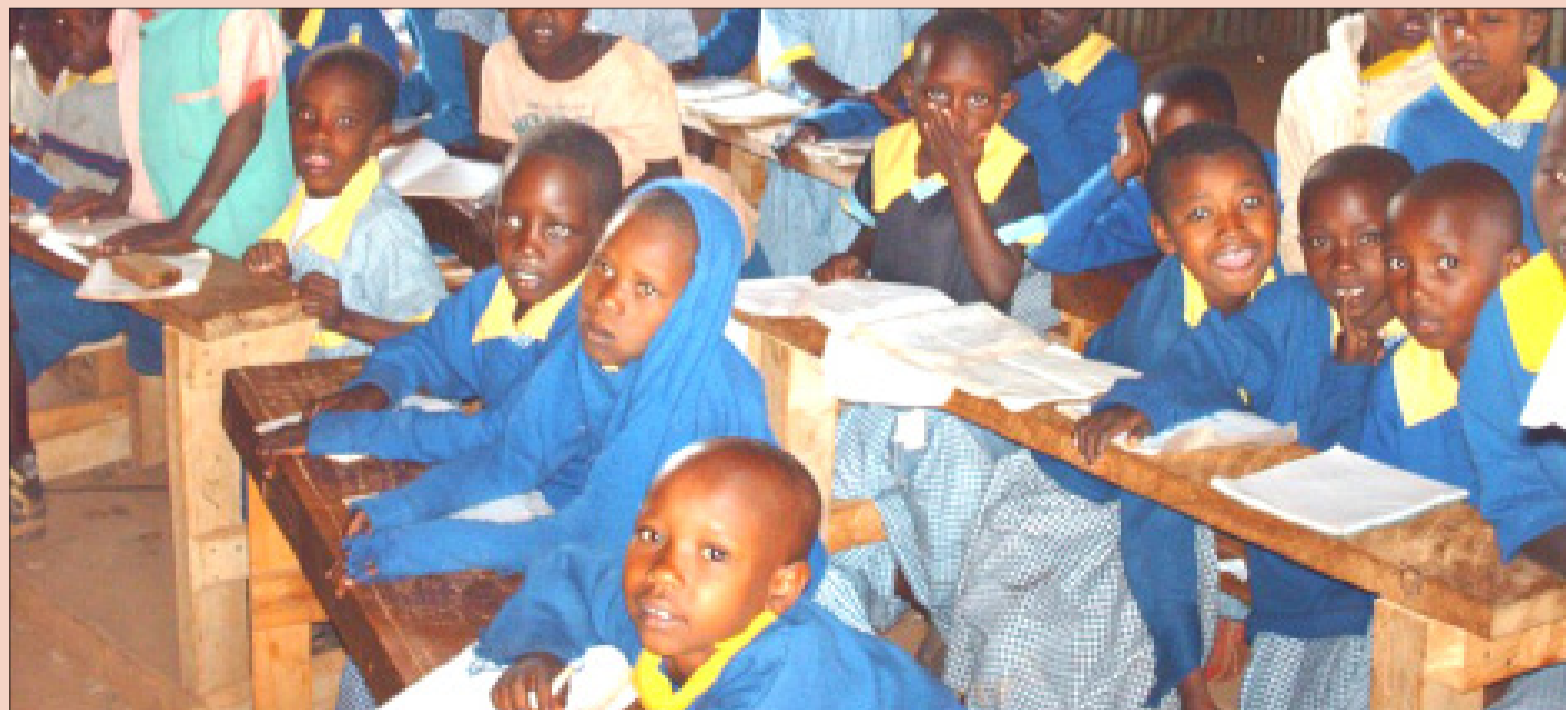
- (a) collaboration with the Quality Assurance and Standards Council, Teachers Service Commission and with other stakeholders to promote standards in basic education and training;
- (b) working with all relevant authorities and agencies to ensure that all the barriers to the right to quality education are removed and that the National and County governments facilitate the realization of the right to education by all Kenyans;
- (c) the initiation of guidelines for approval by the Cabinet Secretary on the establishment of basic education institutions;
- (d) putting measures in place to ensure all children attend and remain in school to complete basic education requirements;
- (e) putting measures to ensure, where applicable, transition to the next level of education, especially for the vulnerable and marginalized children;

## County Education Board

The County Education Boards are to serve as agents of the National Education Board.

## Functions of the County Education Board:

- (a) oversee in consultation with the county government, the operation and management of youth polytechnics, pre-primary education including early childhood care and education programmes in the county;
- (b) coordinate and monitor



Children in class. The number of students has risen since introduction of the free primary education programme.

Photo/File



# ion Act, 2013

- education and training in the County on behalf of the national government and the county government;
- (c) interpret national policies in education based on the county's needs;
- (d) initiate proposals for policy reforms;
- (e) plan, promote, develop, and coordinate education, training and research in the county in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the national education policy and the laws and policies of the county government;
- (f) collaborate with the Board of Management, the Principal, the Head Teacher, and other appropriate authorities in the management of basic schools;
- (g) register and maintain a data bank of all education and training institutions within the county;
- (h) monitor curriculum implementation in basic education in the county;
- (i) monitor the conduct of examinations and assessments at the basic education and training levels in the county in collaboration with all the relevant national bodies;
- (j) collaborate with the Teachers Service Commission on teacher management within the county;
- (k) prepare and submit a comprehensive school termly annual report including Educational Management Information System data to the Cabinet Secretary on all areas of its mandate including education and training services, curriculum, policy implementation and school based audit report within the County;
- (1) coordinate with all relevant agencies to ensure that all the barriers to the right to quality education are removed and with National Government to facilitate realization of the right to education within the county;
- (m) put measures in place



*Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, Education Cabinet Secretary.*

- to ensure all children and youth of school going age within the county attend and stay in to complete basic education.
- (n) perform such other functions as may be necessary for the better carrying out of the functions of the county education board under this Act or any other written law.

Further the County Education Board may in consultation with the National Education Board and relevant stakeholders appoint a sub county education office with clear functions and powers.

#### **Composition of County Education Boards**

County Education Board consists of a Chairperson, and twelve other members appointed by the Cabinet Secretary through an open and competitive process and include -

- (a) an educationist with an experience of five years,
- (b) the County Director of Education who is the Secretary to the County Education Board;
- (c) a representative of the county executive in charge of education;
- (d) a representative of the Teachers Service Commission

- (e) where applicable, one person each representing-
- (i) jointly, the National Council of Churches of Kenya and the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya;
- (ii) the Kenya Episcopal Conference; and
- (iii) the Muslims Education Council;
- (f) a representative of the association of private schools;
- (g) two representatives of a trade union representing the interest of teachers;
- (h) two representatives of parents teachers association; and
- (i) a representative of persons with disability;
- (j) two members nominated by the following bodies-
- (i) the Primary School Head Teachers' Association; and
- (ii) the Secondary School Principals Association.
- (k) a representative of a child rights organization.

The new law prescribes that in appointing persons as Chairperson and members of the County Education Board, the Cabinet Secretary must adhere to the principle of gender equity, regional, ethnic and religious balance, transparency, openness and competitiveness and uphold the principle of

equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

(3) All members of the County Education Board must have a minimum qualification of secondary education certificate.

#### **Committees of County Education Board**

The Act provides a mechanism to allow for the establishment of committees on-

- (a) finance, audit and human resources;
- (b) basic education;
- (c) special needs education;
- (d) early childhood care and education;
- (e) vocational institutions and youth polytechnics;
- (f) standards and quality assurance;
- (g) assessment and examinations;
- (h) dispute resolution; and
- (i) human rights and gender.

#### **Roles of the county government include**

- (a) the provision of funds required for the development of the necessary infrastructure for institutions of basic education and training used for conducting pre-primary education, childcare facilities, homecraft centres and village polytechnics.
- (b) Pursuant to Article 187 of the Constitution, the national government

may, upon request and with agreement between both governments, transfer its functions relating to infrastructure development of primary schools and secondary schools to a county government.

- (c) Where the national government transfers its functions to a county government, it may also allocate conditional grants to that county government to cater for the additional responsibilities arising from the transfer.

#### **Roles of the Sponsor —**

- (a) to participate and make recommendations of review of syllabus, curriculum, books and other teaching aids;
- (b) representation in the School Management
- (c) to provide supervisory and advisory services in matters regarding spiritual development in schools including the appointment of chaplains at their own expense;
- (d) maintenance of spiritual development while safeguarding the denomination or religious adherence of others;
- (e) to offer financial and infrastructural support.

# Youth cry foul over lack of jobs in Kilifi County

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

YOUTH in Kilifi County have protested against being sidelined by the county government.

The youth said though the county government has been advertising job opportunities in the local media, most of them have been unable to apply as they lacked the required academic standards.

Speaking to The Link at Pwani University where they are undergoing an entrepreneurship business training program coordinated by US government, the youth demanded that the

county government revise downwards the employment requirements to accommodate youth in the devolved unit.

According to the Constitution, at least 75 percent of the job opportunities found in the counties should go to the locals as long as they meet the required conditions but in the event that locals do not meet the required threshold, such persons can be sourced from other counties.

Led by Mr Dena Saha, the youth said the requirements that applicants must have a university degree will disfranchise youth in the area as most

them do not qualify.

"Youth in Kilifi have lost hope of getting jobs in the county government because the required educational qualifications are far beyond the reach of the majority," said Mr Shaha.

They feared that most of the job opportunities will be taken up by people from outside the county if the high education requirements are not revised to suit the reality on the ground.

Mr Saha said most of the youth dropped out of form four while others managed to secure diploma certificates in different tertiary collages but still they do not qualify for the jobs.

He said the county governments were created to ensure that local people benefit from opportunities available at the county level and get equal share of development resources but targets may not be achieved if the officials of the Kilifi county government will not consider some issues affecting the people.

They said most youth do not have the required degrees due to poverty facing their families.

He said though there have been bursaries at the constituency level and the ministry of education, the funds had not benefited them as the money

## Ganze residents push for individual title deeds

By BEKADZO TONDO

FAMILIES in Ganze District of Kilifi County have opposed plans by the county government to survey and adjudicate their land as communal land.

The residents instead want the land surveyed and individual title deeds issued to end conflicts among them.

Speaking during a peace meeting convened by both the national and the county government at Ndigiria chief's office, the residents argue that the proposal to give them communal title deeds would deny them full control of their land.

Former Councillor Mr Karisa Nyiro said that the only way that the central and county government can address land disputes in the area was to ensure that communal land was surveyed and individual title deeds given to the people.

"If the government has to get a permanent solution over the frequent land disputes in Ndigiria, then the communal land and group ranches must be surveyed and individual title deeds issued to the people," said Mr Nyiro.

The residents were reacting to sentiments expressed by the executive committee member of Kilifi county government in charge of lands, energy, housing and physical planning Mr John Mazuri who said that the county government will hold consultative meetings with the residents with the aim of having their land surveyed and adjudicated into group ranches.

The sentiments were not received well by the residents who said they have the right to own individual land and issued with title deeds.

Mr Mazuri had argued that the people of Giriama community could benefit much from their semi-arid land if they get issued with group title deeds. The executive member had earlier noted that lack of proper ownership of the communal land which has been classified as ranch land had made it possible for herders from outside to invade the zones to get pasture and water for their animals.

"Invasion of the communal lands in this area by herders of the Somali origin has been caused by the fact that the Giriama community has no title deeds for the land and registration of group ranches could be of great importance to them.

Among the community owned ranches found in Ndigiria location in Ganze district include Mapotea, Dola and Ndigiria group ranches.

The privately owned ranches include the Giriama ranch and that owned by the government under the agricultural development corporation (ADC). Deputy speaker for Kilifi County assembly Mr Teddy Mwambire urged the people to live in harmony and look for better ways of resolving their land disputes.

Mr Mwambire who is also the area ward representative noted that the land owners were being exploited by Somali herders who pay them peanuts to use their land for animal grazing and watering.

"The people of Ndigiria location in Kilifi county have the right to get benefits from their communal land but it is sad to see that some herders of the Somali origin have been paying the residents peanuts to use their land for herding purposes," said Mr Mwambire.

# KeNHA allocates Ksh20 billion towards rehabilitation of roads

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) plans to spend Ksh.20 billion towards the rehabilitation of roads in Nyanza Province.

On completion, the roads will boost the economic potential of the region that is rich in agriculture and tourism.

The KeNHA Nyanza Provincial Regional Assistant Manager Michael Ngala said that rehabilitation work has already started.

"We have 1,600 kilometres of road network in the region that we are working on. The roads are to further open up the region for development," said Mr. Ngala, adding that one of the key roads under construction is the Kericho-Nyamasaria road that is 53 per cent complete.

He at the same time said that plans are underway to put up a ring road around Lake Victoria, with a view to enhancing fishing and tourism activities in the area. Ngala said feasibility studies for the over than 100 kilometres road are almost complete.

The official said the Nyamasaria-Kisian bypass that covers 25 kilometres is halfway done and is to cost Ksh.5.8 billion.

The road was commissioned by former President Mwai Kibaki, in April last year and the works are being undertaken by Chinese construction firm, Sino Hydro Corporation. The road is to take two and half years to be complete.

Ngala was speaking recently when KeNHA engineers and other officials

took the media on a tour of the 76 kilometres Kisumu-Kericho road, which costs Kshs.8.1 billion.

The road's Resident Engineer John Okumu said it is 53 per cent complete and construction is being undertaken by SBI International.

"The construction is on course and is scheduled to be completed at the end of September, next year," said Mr. Okumu.

He said the road will have 16 kilometres of climbing lanes along Kap-

soit and a lorry park that has a capacity to hold 200 trucks at Nyamasaria.

Ngala also said the Kisumu-Kakamega 51 kilometre road rehabilitation has commenced at a cost of Ksh.4.4 billion and the works would take two year. "It will have a 10 kilometre dual carriage from Kisumu to Kiboswa and another one kilometre at Amalembe, just before Kakamega town," he said.

Nyanza region has six counties, namely: Kisii, Kisumu, Nyamira,

Siaya, Homa Bay and Migori.

The region is endowed with cash crops such as rice, tea and sugarcane but poor road network is one of the challenges facing its fruitful exploitation.

In June, the Treasury Cabinet Secretary Henry Rotich allocated Kshs.97.9 billion in 2013/14 budget for roads.

The funds, he said, will be used for road expansion, upgrading and rehabilitation throughout the country.



Heavy construction equipment at Nyamasaria-Kericho Highway where the Kenya National Highways Authority is undertaking rehabilitation works. Photo/File

# Youth cry foul over lack of jobs in Kilifi County

By BEKADZO TONDO

YOUTH in Kilifi County have protested against being sidelined by the county government.

The youth said though the county government has been advertising job opportunities in the local media, most of them have been unable to apply as they lacked the required academic standards.

Speaking to The Link at Pwani University where they are undergoing an entrepreneurship business training program coordinated by US government, the youth demanded that the county government revise downwards the employment requirements to accommodate youth in the devolved unit.

According to the Constitution, at least 75 percent of the job opportunities found in the counties should go to the locals as long as they meet the required conditions but in the event that locals do not meet the required threshold, such persons can be sourced from other counties.

Led by Mr Dena Saha, the youth said the requirements that applicants must have a university degree will disfranchise youth in the area as most of them do not qualify.

"Youth in Kilifi have lost hope of getting jobs in the county government because the required educational qual-

ifications are far beyond the reach of the majority," said Mr Shaha.

They feared that most of the job opportunities will be taken up by people from outside the county if the high education requirements are not revised to suit the reality on the ground.

Mr Saha said most of the youth dropped out of form four while others managed to secure diploma certificates in different tertiary collages but still they do not qualify for the jobs.

He said the county governments were created to ensure that local people benefit from opportunities available at the county level and get equal share of development resources but targets may not be achieved if the of-

officials of the Kilifi county government will not consider some issues affecting the people.

They said most youth do not have the required degrees due to poverty facing their families.

He said though there have been bursaries at the constituency level and the ministry of education, the funds had not benefited them as the money offered was little and at times disbursed based on patronage.

"It is true that people from Coast region have been marginalized in the past and the same is likely to be replicated at the counties if the job requirements will not be looked into," said Mr Saha.

# Residents protest over illegal allocation of a public facility

By BEKADZO TONDO

RESIDENTS of Kilifi County are embroiled in a tussle with a private developer in Kilifi County over the ownership of a public recreational facility.

The residents led by a 75 year old woman of British national Mrs. Philippa Corse who has lived in Kilifi over the last 66 years, say that they have been preserving the half an acre piece of land at Kilifi creek for recreational purposes but the plot has been illegally allocated to a private developer.

"My concern as an environmentalist who has been involved in the decoration and taking care of this site for many years is that the plot has suddenly been allocated to a private developer who plans to put up a building," said Mrs Corse

But the Asian family said to have been allocated the land led Mr. Ali Yusuf claimed the piece of land legally belonged to them as they have a title deed which they obtained in 1977.

According to the land ownership papers, the piece of land plot number 50541 and a title deed number 15580 has a development plan from the defunct Kilifi town council.

The documents further showed that an environmental impact assessment report from National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) dated February 25, 2013 approved the development of the plot.

"We officially own this plot as we have a title deed, a development plan from the council and an environmental impact assessment report from the national environmental management authority," said Mr Yusuf But the lo-

cal residents led by the British women have opposed the allocation of the plot saying it has been serving the locals and foreigners as a recreational site.

Mrs Corse said she had been involved in beautifying the site which is also holds an old baobab tree which creates a good shed and attracts good breeze from the Kilifi Indian Ocean creek. The locals accused the former chief officers of Kilifi town council of hurriedly allocating the plot to the private developer though they knew the site was being used for recreational purposes.

Recently, the residents clashed with the developer and accused the family of acquiring the plot illegally. The Asian family brought in some police officers to guard the people they had hired to construct a perimeter wall at the plot.

Kilifi OCS Mr.FanuelMusonye had to dispatch some riot police officers who directed the British woman and the Asian family to meet at his office.

The Asian family was given ahead to develop the plot while the local residents vowed to block him.

Mrs. Corse said it was illegal for anybody to construct a building 60 meters from the water point and said the construction at the disputed plot was less than 30 meters away.

"The government must be serious and protect the environment near the ocean line by implementing the laws which restricts private developers from constructing buildings below 60 meters from the shoreline," said Mrs Corse.

The controversy surrounding the ownership of the site and its development comes barely a month after the

chairman of national land commission Dr. Mohamed Swazuri visited Kilifi County and announced that all buildings which were built within 60 meters range from the shore line will be demolished.

## New regulations to curb the sale of lethal brews

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

A DISPUTE has erupted between the government and brewers of mnazi in Coast Province following fresh plans to regulate the sale and consumption of the palm wine.

Mnazi, which was legalized about ten years ago, will now be subjected to the provisions of the law that impose age restriction, time limits and stringent hygiene requirements for drinkers, sellers and tappers.

Mnazi traders are now required to sell the drink when it is still "reasonably fresh" and supply sterile straws. Traders have also been warned not to add water to the alcoholic sap.

It has also been decided that besides maintaining personal hygiene, including "clean and short fingernails" and "short and protective clothing" for those who sell the drink, sellers must ensure the brew sold has an alcohol content of between 5 and 8 percent.

The Kenya Coconut Development Authority (KCDA), which regulates the coconut sector, says the new measures are meant to regulate consumption and facilitate health and hygiene among traders of the local brew.

Henceforth, tappers and sellers will be required to acquire a food handlers and medical certificate, and the drink will be sold only to people aged 18 years and above, between 5 pm and 11 pm on weekdays and 2 pm and 11 pm on weekends.

KCDA chairman, Dr Titus Kadere Tunje, says the proposed rules will also help protect the traders, who are mostly women, from police harassment and also curb the trade of illicit brews in drinking dens. "We don't want to breed an alcoholic nation. People should work," Dr Tunje said recently as he defended the new rules.

Mnazi is legal and the laws are only meant to ensure that safety measures and public health and sanitation are properly adhered to. We don't want to see cases of police arresting people and charging them with selling illicit brews," he added.

The new regulations were reportedly unveiled following consultations between KCDA and stakeholders from all the six counties at the Coast together with Nacada. However, it is not clear when the meeting took place.

The Link has seen a sheet of the new regulations published after the meeting and distributed to sellers.

The laws also seek to tame excessive drinking by imposing restrictions on where the wine may be drunk. The regulations prohibit dens from being erected near schools, mosques or churches.

These structures should be strong and well erected, with good aeration and ventilation, and they "should not act as a hiding point for criminals or act as brothels".

Recently, Mombasa County Commissioner, Nelson Marwa said the government has no intention of banning palm wine but wants to bring order to the sector with the new regulations. "Anyone who fails to follow these regulations will be arrested and charged," Mr. Marwa warned.

# Govt will make agriculture profitable, says Uhuru

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE Government will soon embark on an initiative that seeks to transform farming in the country into a commercial enterprise.

President Uhuru Kenyatta say that Government will ensure all farmers irrespective of landholding make a decent income out of agricultural activity.

He said the Government would transform agriculture from a modest subsistence affair of minimal prospects into an enterprise presenting diverse opportunities in finance, investment, processing, trade and other commercial services besides traditional farm work.

"Our Jubilee Government lays great emphasis on commercial farming in order to ensure we help our farmers adopt modern farming technologies and that they have equipment and fertilizers that enable them move away from subsistence farming and eradicate poverty", said the President.

He said strategies for achieving this agenda include expanding access to finance, stabilising farm input prices and enhancing availability, mechanising agriculture and increasing arable land in the country by initiating irrigation schemes.

"As a Government we have started irrigation projects the greatest of which lie in Tana River County and other areas of the Coast region. If we open more land for irrigation and move away from rain fed farming, we will achieve food security on a consistent basis," said President Kenyatta.

He said the Government will complement the strategies by directing private investment in the sector through the provision of appropriate incentives as well as intensifying value-addition for all sectors such as livestock, fisheries and agro-forestry.

Speaking when he officially opened the Mombasa International Show that was also attended by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, President Kenyatta said integration of the East African region would provide a sizeable market for the regions' prod-



President Uhuru Kenyatta and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni at the Co-operative Bank of Kenya stand after opening the 2013 Mombasa International Show. The President said his government would soon initiate an agricultural revolution to help Kenyan farmers. Photo/File

ucts and services, attract investment and create employment for the youth.

"We will have a market that is sizeable, a market that can attract investment, a market that can help us create the much needed employment. This is the road we want to take," he said.

He said the East African Community states should unite to establish joint value addition processing plants for tea, coffee and other crops in order to compete in the world markets and avoid exploitative tendencies of global traders and middlemen.

He welcomed a recent resolution that allows free movement of goods, services and people within the East African Community member states of Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda.

The decision was agreed by Presidents Kenyatta, Yoweri Museveni and Paul Kagame of Rwanda during a regional infrastructure conference in Mombasa.

President Kenyatta said citizens were now free to travel unhindered

using national identity cards, student identity cards, voters' cards and other official identification documents.

"Time has come to remove borders that cannot help us and allow our citizens to travel freely to work and do business and the benefits will flow for us all," President Kenyatta said.

The President said continued disunity among regional states was counterproductive noting that a lone ranger policy would not help regional states to develop economically and uplift the livelihoods of their people.

He said many ethnic communities in the region such as the Maasai, the Teso and the Somali, among others, straddle territorial borders and interact with ease in social and economic activities.

"Colonial boundaries cannot help us except to cause unnecessary conflicts. We are one people," he said.

President Kenyatta called on Kenyans to unite and exercise discipline and focus on issues of development

instead of spending quality time politicking.

He said his Government was committed to cooperate and work with all county governments to expand economic activities such as agriculture, value addition of products in order to increase revenues, achieve food security and create wealth.

Speaking during the occasion, President Museveni said the greatest strength and resource for the East African states was the integration of the 150 million population into a common market.

He decried tribalism and religious intolerance as evils that have caused underdevelopment and called for greater integration among the people of East Africa.

President Museveni also called for modern agricultural practices complemented with industrialisation, service industry and Information Communication Technology to spur greater economic growth in the region.

# County commissioners put on notice over drug abuse

By MALACHI MOTANO

COUNTY Commissioners who fail to eradicate alcohol and drug abuse in their counties risk losing their jobs.

President Uhuru Kenyatta said curbing the drug menace in the counties is one of the main responsibilities of the administrators.

The President said those who are

unable to deliver results should pave the way for others to do the job.

"In two months time we expect County Commissioners to submit reports on what they have done to eliminate the vice in their areas of jurisdiction," the President said.

The President said his Government is committed to ensuring the

youth develop into responsible and productive citizens. He called on leaders and parents to join hands in fighting drug and alcohol abuse which were ruining the lives of the youth.

The President said the youth should shun destructive habits. He advised them to take advantage of Government funded initiatives, including

the Youth Enterprise Fund, to improve their economic status.

On the political front, President Kenyatta appealed to Kenyans to put politics aside and focus on developing the country.

"Let us unite and work together to build a country we will all be proud to call home," President Kenyatta said.

# Nyeri County ventures into maize flour production

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI County has become the first county to launch its own maize meal flour.

The new brand maize meal flour named DABO was launched recently near Nyeri town by the Nyeri governor Nderitu Gachagua and the Anchor Flour Millers Managing Director Peter Muthee.

The governor noted that after the promulgation of the new Constitution in 2010, it became paramount that with the new county government, each County was mandated to be self sustaining and self-reliant.

He lauded the initiative of the new product saying that the Anchor Flour Millers Company has become a good example of the other counties adding that his county government will support such initiatives.

"Hence citizens of this county were mandated to come up with plans and programmes that will add value to the economy of the county, just like we see in first World Countries such as USA and Germany," said the governor.

Gachagua said those who invest locally have an added advantage in his county government than the foreign companies and encouraged many other local companies to follow suit.

The MD said, "We seek to play our role as entrepreneurs in the realization of Vision 2030 by propagating the vision's three pillars; economic, social and political governance. We have in the Social Pillar- invested in the people of Kenya through employment and attachment opportunities for

the students of all gender and social background."

Others present included Nyeri Town MP Esther Murugi and Nyeri county commissioner Michael Mwangi who lauded the investments and urged others to follow suit since the initiative will create jobs for the local youth and also ensure there is food security.

"We found the need to establish a Milling plant in Nyeri County to ease the life for our people. The plant will also provide storage facilities for farmers and therefore instead of transporting huge bulk of Maize to Nairobi, one can offload it here Nyeri," said the MD.

"The company applies stringent measures on processing our products

to ensure exceptionally high quality with a taste that is simply amazing. The product is processed using excellent quality basic ingredients that are sourced from reliable and certified vendors. The new maize meal has its quality which meets satisfaction," Muthee said.

DABO fortified maize meal which comes in 1kg, 2kg, 5kg and 10kg, he

says, is the company's flagship product and is renowned for its purity, long shelf life, nominal price and excellent nutritive value.

A 2kg pack currently is retailing at Sh110 solitary competing with the highest in the market as at now which goes for Ksh140.

The product launched is called DABO which is a slogan coined from the statement Double, meaning 'Twice the goodness.'

Dabo is a maize meal fortified with Minerals and Vitamins. It is renowned for its purity, long shelf life, nominal price and excellent nutritive value. It stands out from the rest of the pack due to its fortification of minerals and Vitamins.

He said the company which is a constituent of the renowned GM Kariuki Hardware Limited leads other processors and suppliers of maize flour in Mt Kenya region as the first flour miller with its maize meal fortified with Vitamins and Minerals.

"Fortified with vitamins and minerals, it stands out among the rest in the market because of its beneficial prowess available for people out there who cannot afford a variety of meals making it the staple meal," says Muthee.

He stated that besides Dabo comes Nyumbani Maize Meal which is renowned for its uniqueness, excellent quality and fair pricing qualities.

This, he says, is attributed to the up-to-date infrastructure that processes each product by using latest techniques in the clean and hygienic environment under the strict supervision of their highly qualified professionals.

Muthee said the company has also helped to create attachment opportunities for the students at our neighbouring Dedan Kimathi University, Karatina University, Kenya Methodist University- Nyeri Campus, Kenyatta University- Nyeri Campus and middle level colleges such as Nyeri Technical, Rware College of Accountancy, Mathenge Institute, who are studying Food Science, Entrepreneurship, Quality Control, Procurement and Supplies.



Nyeri County Governor Nderitu Gachagua (right) and the Anchor Flour Millers MD Peter Muthee (left) while launching the Dabo maize meal flour near Nyeri town recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

# Kimana residents set to benefit from agribusiness training centre

By HENRY OWINO

RESIDENTS of Kimana in Loitoktok in Kajiado County have every reason to smile following the introduction of modern farming technology by Amiran Kenya Company Limited. The move comes at a time when the world is experiencing harsh climatic conditions which are hampering crop production hence food security.

Kimana residents are the first among the fifteen centers in the country that Amiran is targeting to open up Agribusiness Training Centers. The goal is to provide skills and knowledge to the residents to be self reliant instead of relying on relief food.

This is geared towards the realization of number one millennium development goal (MDG) of eradicating hunger and poverty by 2015. The Company is therefore determined to propel Kenya into realization of the goal through agribusiness education. The most affected and targeted are people living in arid and semi-arid lands.

Food production in the region is expected to improve to ensure good nutrition, health and eventually boost county's economy. It is said well fed people are industrious and contribute

to the development of a nation's business and economy.

Amiran also aims at empowering youth and women to venture into the modern agribusiness therefore creating jobs opportunities for thousands of unemployed youth. Kimana residents and communities surrounding the area are the first beneficiaries to own such agribusiness education center.

The initiative is set to impact the lives of the residents positively in terms of agricultural knowledge at the community, county and national level. Empowering communities through sustainable agricultural innovations, is the only way of ensuring food security in the country.

According to Pinhas Moskovich, the Amiran, Managing Director for Kenya and East Africa, the company has a history of success. He said Amiran farmers countrywide can attest to the benefits and how the technology has helped improve their lives.

Moskovich revealed that Amiran is known for its training package that has been a major motivating factor to the farmers in the country. He explained that the horticulture company targets communities in areas hard-hit by drought and flung regions where rain water is insufficient. For instance,

North Eastern Region, Eastern Region, parts of Rift Valley and Nyanza Regions.

Moskovich said the company is now introducing Agribusiness Training Centers in the country, which will allow farmers at the community levels to access training on practical lessons. He added that it is important for farmers to know main agricultural practices such as; nursery setting, transplanting and introduction of various seed varieties to the seedbeds.

"After training the farmers, they would be able to differentiate between seed varieties either by colour, size or growth period. Proper application of agro-chemicals and correct use of fertilizers is always emphasized in all trainings so that farmers master the skills," explained Moskovich.

"Our training module is impacting all generations through knowledge. For instance students in more than 1000 schools, youth groups and women groups have benefited from the training package. To make us successful, we have partnered with World Vision Kenya, Kenya Ministry of Youth and Sports, Health Africa Resources Team (HEART), Kenya Red Cross Society among others", Managing Director disclosed.

Moskovich stated that in areas where the techniques have been adopted; communities are upgrading and engaging in modern farming methods. Some of the techniques are greenhouse farming and implementation of drip irrigation farming. He however said most of the farmers are located in rural areas.

Amiran Company is mostly referred to as the gateway to new agricultural innovations that bring the field-proven farming knowledge and techniques to the Kenya farmers' doorstep. This entails establishing communal training centers and equipping them with skills to ensure sustainability. The company believes in the famous quote: "If you give a man fish, you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish, you have fed him for lifetime".

According to Yariv Kedar, the Head of Agronomy Division, Chemicals, Fertilizer and Seeds, the company plans to bolster agricultural production by developing education systems that will empower farmers in both rural and urban areas.

Kedar said Amiran Kenya Limited has been a pioneer in the Kenya agricultural sector, being the first company to introduce large scale green-

houses in the late 1980s. He added it is Amiran which introduced the first drip irrigation systems to Kenya in the mid-1970s and has continued to drive the incorporation of modern agricultural inputs into the country's agricultural sector.

"Throughout the years Amiran continues to provide innovative agribusiness solutions to Kenyan farmers, diversifying into small-scale agribusiness through the introduction of the award winning Amiran Farmers Kit (AFK). It has enabled the poor also to benefit and change their economy and health status to the best," Kedar stated.

The Agronomist added the AFK is also a 'green technology' which is environmentally friendly and positively impacts efforts to conserve soil and water. He assured farmers that the model has already proved to be a sustainable way of practicing agribusinesses, anchored on gravity based drip irrigation system and composed of globally compliant components. For example, a greenhouse, seeds, fertilizers, agro-chemicals and strengthened by an innovative training and agro-support component.

David Ole Nkedenye, Governor of Kajiado County, who presided over

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 2,000 people from Othaya in Nyeri County have benefited from a free medical clinic conducted at Karima area.

The patients were treated for various ailments, thanks to an annual event organised by Unjiru Development Network and several other sponsors who included Kenya Pipeline Company and Aga Khan Hospital among others.

The chairman of the group Cyrus Kanyi called on the government to address the issue of under-staffing, staff motivation and shortage of equipment in the health centre to enable it achieve a healthier nation.

He however lauded government's efforts in waiving maternity fee in all the public hospitals saying this was the first step towards achieving the jubilee health pledges in spite of the budgetary constraints.

A team of medical personnel from the Agha Khan Hospital and Ministry of Public Health among others conducted the one day exercise held at Kairia Primary School.

Kanyi said that the main objective of the camp was to screen, treat and refer the complicated cases for further investigations and treatment besides collecting data to identify the major health problems affecting the local community.

Unjiru Development Network Group main objective is to engage in social and economic activities like health, education and agriculture in order to help and empower the local community.

One of the sponsors, Kenya Pipeline Company Business De-

# Othaya residents benefit from a free medical camp

velopment partner Simon Sang said this was part of corporate social responsibility which is aimed

to support the community.

He said the company has been sponsoring health, education and

even agriculture matters.

The chairman Kanyi urged the community to join the group.



**A patient undergoes blood pressure tests at Kairia Primary School in Othaya, Nyeri county during a free medical camp organised by Unjiru Development Network recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa**

## Kimana residents set to benefit from agribusiness training centres

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the official launch of the Training Center, urged the residents to take up the opportunity as a blessing for themselves. He challenged residents to diversify their agriculture not only in livestock rearing but also in growing crops using modern technology.

Nkediye said with climate change being experienced globally, Kimana residents must now embrace modern farming techniques in order to keep hunger and poverty at bay. He told the residents that mixed farming has many advantages over mono-farming.

The Governor promised his constituents of his support as long as they form groups and are ready to adopt the new agribusiness technology brought in the region. He said every county has got its own funds to be used in supporting serious and focused groups that are ready to develop themselves and beneficial to the county.

"I am pleased with Amiran Company for bringing this project to my county. Indeed it is true that this project has been successful in areas which it has been planted and I know Kimana would be successful too. I am urging the community here to come out in large numbers and form groups to be trained and start cashing money," Governor Nkediye urged.

He was optimistic that community lifestyles would never be the same again once they implement the new technology. The Governor admitted that the technology cannot be challenged by climate change such as drought that kills thousands of livestock every year in the region.

Fridah Katwiri who is one of the trainers said the Amiran kit encourages small scale farming because it only covers a small portion of land i.e an eighth of an acre of land. She urged farmers to try it out since all varieties of tomatoes take two and half months to mature after transplanting.

Katwiri says a farmer can harvest the tomatoes fruits for a period of eight to ten months before they die off.

Katwiri clarified the kit comes as a package, so the farmer gets all the products and equipments for the whole season. She explained the kit is affordable to all farmers and with drip irrigation which is water economical, it can be used in any part of the country.

"We have different models of greenhouses which suit different climatic conditions of our country. For example, the sizes ranges from 8m by 15m at Ksh 241,250, 8m by 24m going for Ksh324, 100 and 6m by 12m costs Ksh 140,000," explained Katwiri.

Katwiri expounded: "After we sell our kits, we don't just leave the farmer but we instead offer training to the farmer on how to use and maintain the greenhouse. We also do installation of the kit to our farmers, agronomic support to our farmers regularly and the kits are fully insured.

## Athi Water promises to address water crisis in Nairobi

By HENRY OWINO

THE Athi Water Services Board (AWSB) has pledged to end the perennial water problem in Nairobi and its environs.

The board which serves more than 6 million people in Nairobi, Kiambu County and Gatanga district in Murang'a County has come with a major plan to alleviate the problem.

According to Reuben Ndolo, the chairman of AWSB, they have come up with a master plan that would ensure Nairobi and other satellite towns have consistent water supply. He reiterated that Athi Water Board is exploring modalities to meet the ever growing water demand.

The chairman said the population in Nairobi and satellite towns has been increasing at a rapid rate. The 2009 population and housing census, the population within Nairobi Metropolitan Region was 6,822,924 which have since increased.

Ndolo said the population growth occurs not only within the municipal boundaries but also in satellite towns bordering the city. He observed that the present trend has contributed to physical development, population growth, optimum housing densities, infrastructure development and the study of Kenya government Vision 2030 strategy.

Ndolo stated that since the creation of the water management

body, service delivery in respect to the vital commodity has improved because of a strengthened institutional framework.

"In our mandate of providing efficient water and sewerage infrastructure, we will continue forging partnership with developing partners, government ministries, NGOs, CBOs among other stakeholders and private players," Ndolo said adding that this will not only provide enough energy, but also build support for mobilizing the required resources for water and sewer infrastructure development in the master plan.

Eng. Malaquen Milgo, the AWSB's Chief Executive Officer said the company is not only working to ensure that the master plan is implemented but ensuring Nairobi residents are provided with additional water for distribution.

Eng. Milgo said the Water Supply Master Plan provides a guideline for investing in water supply infrastructure to fulfil the short, medium and long term water demand for Nairobi City and other 13 Satellite towns. These include; Kikuyu, Ruiru-Juja, Kiambu-Karuri, Githunguri, Mavoko, Ngong ,Ongata- Rongai, Keserian, Thika, Gatundu, Limuru,Tala and Kagundo.

"The plan simply seeks to ensure that the current supply for water outstrips the demand even at peak moments to improve livelihoods and businesses in the

country's capital city and its environs," Eng. Milgo explained.

The CEO clarified: "The Nairobi water supply master plan was first developed by the Athi Water Services Board with funding from the World Bank and the French Development Agency (AFD). It aims at meeting universal water supply targets for Nairobi and 13 satellite towns by 2035".

According to Consumer Federation of Kenya, water demand for Nairobi City is at 650,000 cubic meters daily compared to a supply volume of 431,000 cubic meters and sometimes even less.

However, Eng Milgo pointed out that the board is pursuing other measures to address the biting water shortages.

He said the board has partnered with Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company to wipe out all illegal connections.

He board will clamp down on unscrupulous vendors who divert water and later sell it to innocent residents at unfair and unjustifiable cost.

According to the Master Plan, investments in water supply infrastructure have lagged since 1994 with the completion of the Third Nairobi Water Supply Project Phase 3. And the water demand in Nairobi Metropolitan area now far outstrips supply.

To meet stakeholders' expectations, Eng Milgo said the board would address the medium term plan of their five year strategic

plan for the year 2012-2017. This involves redefining the organization mandate, taking opportunities presented within the operating environment and repositioning the organization as a centre for best practices in bulk water infrastructure development to attract both public and private sector.

He reiterated that Nairobi is a high economic and political priority metropolitan area for the government. This is because the city contributes over 50 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and it is recognized regionally as a trade and economic giant and hub.

"Kenya faces enormous challenges in the development and management of its limited water resources. Furthermore, the magnitude and severity of the water crisis cuts across most sectors of the economy thus making water resources management at high priority that requires urgent attention," Eng. Milgo explained.

The current system is overstretched due to rapid population growth in housing and commercial properties in the city. It has contributed to illegal connections, leakages and inconvenienced residents who sometimes have to endure water rationing.

To ensure that the project is successful and registers optimum desire, there are plans to develop new water sources to supply water to the city. Some option being

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By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE ailing sugar sector is faced with a bleak future as the Comesa safeguard period comes to an end in 2014.

At the expiry of the deadline in March next year, the sector which is currently grappling with cheap imports from Uganda and Tanzania is likely to register drastic drops once the market opens up to competition from sugar processing giants.

The sector is currently bedeviled by myriad of challenges that point to high costs of sugar production – which are about five times more than its neighbours.

Brazil and India, whose production costs average between \$10 and \$20 (Kshs.870-1,740) per tone, are also eagerly eyeing the market.

It costs about (\$600) Ksh.52,200 to produce a tone of sugar in Kenya compared to Uganda and Tanzania's \$140-200 (Kshs.12,180-17,400).

Fears abound that the opening up of the sector to competition is likely to have fatal ramifications which could bring the sector to its knees. Lack of reforms in the sector including the stalling of privatization of State owned millers have only added more obstacles to the sector's growth.

An average Kenyan smallholder farmer plants 0.4 hectares on sugarcane, about half the size of a standard football pitch. This is about 100 times smaller than the average farm used in bulk producing sugar countries.

State officials trying to get smallholder farmers to merge have faced strong opposition.

Most farmers will not agree to merge their farms in fear that they may lose ownership.

"Land is a very emotive issue in Kenya. If you tell your grandfather that you will merge his farm he is not likely to agree to it. He will feel as if he is losing ownership to it," says Rosemary M'Kok, the Kenya Sugar Board's chief executive officers.

Large farms give economies of scale. The farm can be fully mechanized, making planting and harvesting faster.

They also give the farmers bargaining power because they can negotiate the price for their fertilizer and crop. KSB says it is trying to improve the dilapidated road network in the sugar growing areas to enhance efficiency in the delivery of the product to factories.

According to recommendations in a report prepared by Kenyan officials who visited India recently, a pilot study should be undertaken in Muhoroni to convert the outgrower's institution into a co-operative, which will possibly take over the Muhoroni mill currently under receivership.

Although the time frame has not been set, if the farmers take over the Muhoroni mill, through their co-operative, it will be a significant step towards trying to revive the co-operative movement which was the bedrock of the now ailing sugar industry.

Muhoroni is one of the five millers, which are heavily indebted to the Government to the tune of about Ksh.40 billion.

The other four millers are Chemelil, Sony Sugar, Nzoia and Miwani, whose prospects look even dimmer. The lapsing of Comesa safeguards will mean any of the 19 countries, which are part of the Comesa trading block will be able to export whatever volume they so wish to Kenya and they will be exempted from tax.

This is good news for millers in countries like Mauritius and Sudan,

# Sugar industry set for harsh times ahead of Comesa deadline



**Delay in instilling sector reforms and use of obsolete machines has lowered Kenya's competitiveness.** Photo/File

which produce sugar at half the cost of Kenyan millers.

The fact that Kenya produces less sugar than it consumes makes the market even more attractive for other exporters. Kenya's annual production is at 520,000 tonnes compared with the consumption of 740,000 tonnes. Currently, Kenya only allows imports at a maximum of 340,000 tonnes per annum, with the sugar levied at 10 per cent.

But in recent months, Uganda and Tanzania have been accused of illegally dumping sugar in the country.

The two neighbours have done so by what Kenyans officials' term circumventing the rules in their favour. Uganda and Tanzania can import cheap sugar from outside the Comesa region and then export it to Kenya.

Sugar imports from Uganda have increased from a meager 73 tonnes in 2011 to 30,000 tonnes last year, according to official statistics. Imports are not the only threats. Large companies from Mauritius and Sudan are eyeing the Kenyan market.

Mauritian sugar manufacturer, Omnicane, acquired a 25 per cent stake in Kwale International Sugar Company with production starting this year.

This will be a game changer in the industry. Omnicane will be able to produce ethanol and generate electricity, which was the preserve of Mumias Sugar Company (MSC). In Mauritius, for instance, for every \$100 (Kshs.8,700) of revenue from the industry only \$40 (Kshs.4,480) comes from sugar.

The remaining (Kshs.5,220) \$60 comes from power generation, ethanol, industrial sugar and other products, according to figures from the Kenya Sugar Industry survey.

Mumias, listed at the Nairobi Securities Exchange, derives the bulk of its revenues from sugar with the

by-products – ethanol and generation of electricity – only accounting for a fraction of the sales.

There is no better place than the stock market to see the apathy with which investors regard sugar.

Mumias shares are down 13 per cent since the beginning of the year to trade at Kshs.4.10 recently. Since January 2011, the share price has more than halved.

Analysts from Sterling Capital released a research report and put a "sell" recommendation on Mumias Sugar with a target price of Kshs.4.32 per share. The analysts said some of the main challenges facing the company include cane theft, import competition, new entrants to the market and insufficient raw materials.

Mumias Sugar Managing Director Mr. Peter Kebati, however, said they are addressing some of the challenges. "I am sure the share price is a concern to shareholders," he said. "But we are working hard to ensure our competitiveness through securing raw materials and introducing new cane varieties."

The latest challenges to hit Mumias were the resignation of its finance director Chris Kisire at the end of July.

The company said he left because of personal reasons.

One of the biggest challenges for the Kenyan industry is that most of the cane is grown under a rain fed system, which means the crop has a longer maturity period.

The industry's master plan is to increase the area under cane irrigation by about 40,000 hectares annually.

This will be in areas such as Tana River Basin, Nyando Basin and Nzoia Basin.

If the industry remains uncompetitive, especially with the cheaper imports coming into the country, then

a fact-finding mission to Maharashtra State, the wealthiest region in India.

They were to witness first-hand how the second largest sugar producing country is turning around an industry, which at one time was on its deathbed. There are 50 million Indian sugarcane farmers, more than the Kenyan population including those in the Diaspora.

The irony is that Indian sugar millers, which are now farmer owned and much more efficient, are targeting to export sugar to the Kenyan market on a massive scale with a view to diversifying their market.

The findings by the Kenyan officials have been compiled into a report and shared with industry players.

But there is nothing in the report that most Kenyan sugar players did not already know.

The huge difference is that Indian officials have been able to convince farmers to consolidate their small holdings into larger block farms, a move that has forced some of the farmers to move into settlement schemes.

This consolidation has seen the farmers form co-operatives, which own the mills and provide funding to their membership.

Indian farmers use domesticated buffalo and bull to transport sugarcane to factories. Transport accounts for about 40 per cent of the costs. So even though an Indian farmer will take longer, they will make significant savings.



**A worker in a sugarcane farm.**

Photo/File

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

# United Kingdom to help market Kenyan tea, says envoy

UNITED KINGDOM is committed to marketing Kenyan tea globally.

British High Commissioner to Kenya Christian Turner said his government will continue looking for new markets for the Kenyan tea to enable local farmers reap highly from the produce.

Speaking when he toured Iriini Tea Factory in Othaya recently, Turner said Britain has for many years imported Kenya tea adding that the tea accounts for a third in the UK market.

The factory sells some of its coffee to Marks and Spencer supermarkets which are major supermarkets in UK.

He at the same time revealed that his government plans to support power projects in the tea growing areas since energy has been a major challenge in the manufacturing of tea.

“We shall support the tea programmes in the country including marketing. The UK tea market has increased by 20 per cent in the last few years. Tea has ensured that the partnership between Kenya and UK is strong,” he said.

Nyeri Governor Nderitu Gachagua, Othaya MP Mary Wambui, Fair trade International Company Africa director James Mwai, the factory chairman Wanjohi Githinji and Nyeri county commissioner Michael Mwangi accompanied the envoy.

Gachagua lauded Iria-ini tea factory which has been engaged in value addition before exporting their tea.

“Farmers must engage in value addition to enable them reap highly from their produce. The farmers are able to benefit more,” said the governor.

Gachagua said his government has allocated funds this year to improve roads in the area and ease transportation of green tea.



From left British High Commissioner Christian Turner, Fair trade International Company Africa director James Mwai, Othaya MP Mary Wambui at Iria-ini Tea Factory, Othaya when they visited the factory recently. Photo/Joseph ukubwa

Wambui said such initiatives will benefit small scale farmers in the area. The factory chairman urged stake-

holders to help market their tea since they are yet to get good market in large quantities.

## Pima gas cylinders set for other markets countrywide

By HENRY OWINO

PREMIER Gas Limited, the company behind the partial-refill Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) product in 1kg cylinders has embarked on a countrywide programme to distribute the product. This is an aggressive expansion initiative that targets to open up to 50 retail outlets across the country in the next six months.

This follows the successful introduction of Pima Gas in Nairobi that has so far attracted more than 8,000 new LPG users since its launch in February last year. The launch would immediately see the opening of new refillable LPG vendor outlets in Naivasha, Athi-River, Kitengela and Meru among other smaller towns.

“Pima Gas is currently available in 54 outlets spread across Nairobi and Thika, with more than 8,000 consumers who have been converted from the exclusive use of biomass and kerosene to the environmentally friendly LPG,” said Andrew Omolo, the Premier Gas General Manager during the launch of the expansion program in

Naivasha.

“With this expansion, we are targeting to increase our vendor network to 100 before the end of the year, serving more than 20,000 households,” he added.

Omolo said Premier Gas pioneered the refillable gas concept with the aim to cover the vast market at the Base of the Pyramid (BoP) who has been using kerosene, charcoal and firewood as their source of cooking energy.

He stated that the Liquefied Petroleum Gas is cleaner, safer and greener form of cooking energy but its penetration in the market has remained low over the years at only 11 percent of the 8.7 million households.

This compares poorly to the use of kerosene at 68 percent and charcoal 17 percent which have negative effects including being a leading cause of deforestation and association with acute respiratory infections that are linked to 100 deaths in Kenya per day.

“Research has revealed that low income levels, lack of infrastructure and lack of access to information at the BoP were the main hindrances to the use of the cleaner LPG in this segment of the market,” Omolo explained.

“We therefore engineered the Pima Gas solution to sell gas in small cylinders and making it partially refillable to suit the daily family budgets of this market that is often referred to as the ‘kadogo economy,’” he clarified.

Pima Gas is accessible at neighbourhood shops where a consumer can purchase partial refills of gas for as little as Sh50 and Sh200 to fill the 1kg cylinder.

Because the partial refill concept was completely new, the Premier Gas has worked under close supervision of relevant government agencies in the roll out plan over the past 16 months.

“The government was keen to ensure the initiative was a success and we worked closely with officials to promote safety in handling, refilling and extensive consumer education on the safe use of LPG,” Omolo said.

Pima Gas has also been endorsed by the Energy Regulatory Commission, the National Environment Management Agency, the Weights and Measures Department as well as the local authorities.

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# Counties to be connected with fibre optic cable

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Senate plans to ensure that all the 47 counties in the country are connected with fibre optic cable.

The chairman of the Education committee and ICT in the senate who is also the Nyeri senator Mutahi Kagwe said the Senate intends to establish close links with all the 47 counties so as to protect and oversee their functions.

Kagwe said there should also be an ICT centre with a base at every county adding that this will help the counties to improve technologically.

Kagwe who was in the company of five other members of the committee in the senate was speaking at a Nyeri hotel.

The five senators included Daniel Karaba, Harima Mohammed and Okongo Mung'are among others.

Nyeri governor Nderitu Gachagua hosted them.

Kagwe also lamented that Kenya's universities are churning out hundreds of graduates but there are no technicians to serve the same graduates.

"You train a doctor and the doctor needs professionals who can maintain the equipment that the doctor uses," he said.



From left Nyeri senator Mutahi Kagwe who is also the chairman of Education committee in the senate, Nyeri governor Nderitu Gachagua and Kirinyaga senator Daniel Karaba in Nyeri recently.

He said that the country needs more technicians so as to back professionals working in every field.

The Nyeri Senator at the same

time said that Jubilee government will not sacrifice its laptop promise to Kenyan children.

He refuted claims that the gov-

ernment is going to use Ksh 53 billion to implement the laptop project, saying that only Ksh47.5 billion will be spent.

## Athi Water promises to address water crisis in Nairobi

From Page 21

considered for the establishment of different water sources include local sources, ground water development and storage of a low initial capital requirement.

Currently, groundwater contributes 45,000 cubic meters daily to Nairobi's water supply for both domestic and industrial use, with the potential to grow by 1000 cubic meters daily by 2035. Of concern however, is that, development is largely unplanned and regulation is not tight. For instance, available data suggests that for each well that is registered, there may be two to three others that are not.

As water is a vital commodity which the public cannot survive without, Eng Milgo and his team are working to start exploitation of new groundwater areas after the master plan singled out a few outside Nairobi that are said to contain water that is fit for human consumption.

Two are already identified in Kikuyu and Ruiru which are estimated to have a capacity of 64800 cubic meters per day. Diversion and transfer of rivers in the Central highlands is projected to catalyze development of new reservoirs, according to the master plan

details.

"The Fourth phase of Nairobi Water Supply Project which is within the timeframe of 2012-2017 is expected to bring an additional of 120,000 cubic meters per day," Eng Milgo revealed.

Dr Evans Kidero, the Nairobi Governor challenged the AWSB to ensure that they provide enough water today and for generations to come and ensure prudent management and use of water resources.

Dr Kidero said everybody must play a role to make sure that this resource is shared as well. He stressed that there are many communities in the countries who still do not have access to water, so water availability is not a given right.

"Women and children in many places still have to walk hundreds of kilometers to fetch water and sometimes comeback empty handed. Yet there are others who have abundance access to water but take it for granted," Dr Kidero cautioned.

The Nairobi Governor ordered Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company to work extra hard to reduce water losses and wastage. He told them to cut back on unnecessary use, clamp down on illegal connections and abstrac-

tions and ensure all kiosk water vendors have water meters.

"Every industry, every household and every individual must play their role in saving water. We need to be steadfast in achieving our targeted total saving across the entire country and far more in some areas and sectors," Nairobi Governor urged.

He warned that if that is not put into consideration, the shortages or water "outages" will become more and more frequent and the country economy and welfare will suffer. He expressed the need to educate residents on how to conserve and harvest rainwater.

The Governor stated: "We have learned to live with a very variable climate. It has taken much ingenuity, at great cost, to capture and distribute the little water that we have. We now have to recognize that the situation may get worse, either as rainfall declines, as is expected, or becomes more variable and extreme in its occurrence. Climate change is a big challenge today".

Prof Judy Wakhungu, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Water, Environment and Natural Resources said that over the last three years, the ministry managed to provide access to clean drinking water to

over 4.5 million people. She said it was achieved through rehabilitation and expansion of urban and rural water supplies, drilling and equipping boreholes and construction and desilting of water pans and dams.

Prof Wakhungu said with support from donors, the ministry plans to construct major dams owing to scarcity and uneven distribution of water resources in the country adding that projects tailor made to specific areas are to be initiated.

"I would like to inform Athi Water Services Board and other Boards to take into cognizance that safe drinking water and improved sanitation are important pre-conditions for achieving development for our people. In addition, the new constitution recognizes access to adequate water, clean environment and sanitation in the bills of rights," Prof Wakhungu reminded Kenyans.

She encouraged interventions that protect the environment, riparian land and water resources which are crucial in the operations. Adding that AWSB should ensure strategies are in place to ensure environment conservation for sustainability of water sources and resources.

"Without environment conservation, water security will remain a dream so let's provide high quality water for our citizens and make Vision 2030 a reality in water sector," The Cabinet Secretary urged.

## Danida donates cash for Isiolo community conservancy

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Royal Danish Embassy has donated Ksh 28 million to a conservation group in Isiolo County for the creation of a conservation area to protect endangered wildlife species in the wider Laikipia - Samburu ecosystem.

The funds will be channelled to Narupa Community Wildlife Conservancy through the Community Development Trust Fund (CDTF), an arm of the Kenya Government and the European Union which has been funding community projects in the country.

According to the conservancy group chairman Jeremiah Letuiya, the Danish funds will be used to improve tourism, livestock production and marketing activities to ensure that locals benefit from the conservancy.

The project, he said will train the locals on enhanced ecosystem methods resulting in high water infiltration, improved ground cover and higher rates of carbon sequestration. They will work with Africa wildlife foundation and the Oilentile Trust.

CDTF programme coordinator Salesius Njoka Miu said the conservancy will support the local communities in poverty reduction through improved livelihoods systems and the conservation of natural resources.

Miu was leading a team of the board of trustees of the CDTF in visiting and reviewing the ongoing progress of the project.

The board is currently touring seven projects funded by the EU and DANIDA in Murang'a, Kirinyaga, Nyeri, Embu, Tharaka Nithi, Isiolo and Kitui counties.

Miu reiterated that CDTF will continue to closely monitor the use of donor funds on the project which is expected to be completed in the next 36 months.

Meanwhile, the European Union has donated Ksh 16 million to a conservation group in Mathira, Nyeri County.

The money has been allocated to the Mt Kenya Environmental Conservation and Poverty reduction group and will be channelled through the Community development trust fund (CDTF), an arm of the Kenya Government and the European Union which has been funding community projects in Kenya since 1996.

Miu said the EU funding will be used among others to rehabilitate 50 hectares of Mt Kenya forest and reforestation along the rivers, set up greenhouse farming to generate income to hundreds of households in eight locations, establish 16 tree nurseries in eight secondary and eight primary schools in the area and put up roof water catchments in 16 schools within the area.

"Part of the money will also be used for renewable energy technologies with the installation of eight units of rocket stoves in schools and training of 40 artisans in the construction of the stoves," said Miu.

Miu was speaking recently when he led a team of CDTF board of trustees in visiting and reviewing ongoing progress of the project.



# Governor faults privatization of sugar company

By AGGREY BUCHUNU

THE Government has been asked not to rush the privatization of Nzoia Sugar Company without involving cane farmers who are the major stakeholders.

Bungoma County Governor, Kenneth Lusaka, appealed to the government to temporarily halt the process till the farmers are properly organized to buy shares.

Lusaka observed that rushing privatization process of the only surviving factory in Bungoma County may nega-

tively affect cane farmers and the over 10,000 factory workers.

Speaking at the company premises during Nzoia sugar company open day, Lusaka said locals must be given top priority when it comes to buying the company shares.

He called on local leaders to come together and explore appropriate ways that can enable the local community to own the factory in terms of shareholding. Lusaka hinted that the company's nucleus estates will be transferred and held by Bungoma County government

in trust for the county residents.

"The land belongs to the people of Bungoma County and so the move is aimed at protecting it in case of any eventuality," he said.

To improve cane husbandry which is increasingly deteriorating in terms of reduced weight Lusaka challenged the company management to ensure that farmers are supplied with fertilizer on time.

On cane wastage and spillage, the Governor said that plans are under way to curb the menace through installation

of weighing machines at strategic points in the out growers zones.

He disclosed that installation of the machines will start soon at Kibuke and Ndivisi followed by other key areas.

Speaking at the same forum, the company's managing director Saul Wasilwa said the purpose of corporate open day is to give farmers a chance to air their grievances against the firm's operation.

Wasilwa added that despite various challenges the company is determined to address the plight of farmers.

# Modern agricultural technology remains key to food security

By HENRY OWINO

THE world population has been rising significantly in recent years and is expected to reach nine billion by the year 2050 according to experts. This means a higher demand for food and scarcity in supply.

The world, therefore, has to double food production using the same pool of resources which are already diminishing. The global agricultural and food systems will have to change substantially to meet the challenge of feeding the world. Doubling food production using shrinking resources and the emerging challenges in climate change, water stresses, energy insecurity and dietary shifts has become an uphill task.

A successful strategy to improving food production must therefore have multiple approaches that address all the principal issues, key among them; population stabilization, improved food distribution systems and reduced wastage of resources.

For instance a crop improvement strategy that integrates the best of the old (conventional agriculture) and the best of the new (crop biotechnology) practice is therefore needed. This would optimize productivity and contribute to food, feed and fibre security while addressing climate change.

Prof Edward Nguu from University of Nairobi, Department of Biochemistry, explained that biotechnology is a set of tools that use living organisms to make or modify a product, improve plants, trees or animals, or develop microorganisms for specific uses.

Prof Nguu says Agricultural biotechnology is simply the term used in crop and livestock improvement using biotechnology tools. He gives the two types of biotechnology: Traditional which has been practiced since time immemorial and is achieved at organism level and modern biotechnology comprising of advanced science and achieved at cellular level.

"Traditional biotechnology includes techniques such as fermentation while modern biotechnology incorporate DNA manipulation techniques such as genetic engineering. In the later, genes are moved artificially across organisms of all divides," Prof Nguu elaborated.

The Professor says this is the reason why Scientists have taken advantage of this opportunity to produce genetically modified crops. During the development of GM crops, a gene conferring the desired trait can be introduced in a plant from an organism that is not necessarily in the same family.

The first ever generation of GM crops, focused on lowering production costs incurred by farmers. But they were not substantially different for consumers either in appearance or nutritional value.

The second generation of biotech



Food security remains the key to modern agricultural technology.

cropland, focused on traits of direct benefit to consumers. They include enhanced nutritional content, enhanced flavor, texture, taste, aroma and colour.

The third generation of biotech crops focuses on greater abilities to resist stresses such as tolerance to drought. Scientific research thus takes time to ensure successful results and satisfaction.

Genetically modified foods have the potential to solve the world's hunger and malnutrition problems. In addition, they can help protect and preserve the environment by increasing yield and reducing reliable chemical pesticides and herbicides. Yet there are many challenges preventing these benefits, especially in the areas of safety testing, regulation and international policy. If these are well addressed to people especially the smallholder farmers in developing countries, benefits are enormous if the technology is adopted in Kenya.

These GM crops have raised a number of concerns including allergenic reactions, development of antibiotic resistance, environmental issues, and development of super weeds among others. However, for the last 17 years that these crops have been commercialized no negative effects have been reported.

Additionally, independent reviews from competent bodies such as the world Health Organization (WHO) and locally, Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) have affirmed their safety.

Dr Simon Gichuki, from Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), affirms that agricultural crop biotechnol-

ogy techniques are the only tool for enhancing food production. Though it may not be a panacea to the problems facing food production, it is one of the major tools that will greatly enhance food security in the country if properly utilized.

The concept offers many opportunities in developing superior crop varieties that are; high-yielding, nutritious and able to withstand both biotic and abiotic stresses. Acceptance challenges compounded by deliberate misinformation have however limited its adoption in the developing world. "Kenya is an example of developing countries which rejected the introduction of genetically modified foods and went ahead to ban the same," Dr Gichukiregretted.

Other issues hindering the acceptance of biotech crops in most developing countries Kenya included are; negative perceptions regarding their safety for human consumption, impact on the environment, ethical considerations and ownership of the technology.

Dr Gichuki, however, said that Kenya has adopted other technologies to improve crop production include and this range from tissue culture to marker-assisted selection and genetic modification. In the livestock sector, the focus is largely on the development of vaccines and diagnostic kits for effective vaccination and accurate diagnosis of livestock diseases. And in forestry, clonal technology is being used to produce high-quality seedlings.

"Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) whose main business is to en-

sure the product is fit for human consumption approves the use of GMOs," Margaret Aleke, a Biosafety Officer at KEBS said adding that products should however be labelled for purposes of taste and preference by users.

According to Geoffrey Makokha Odanga, MP for Matayos Constituency, Busia County, who sits in the parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Livestock, genetically modified crops is going to be introduced in Kenya very soon since MPs are scrutinizing the Bill before the President can assent it into law. He gave the example of Brazil, China, India and Malawi where GM crops have helped to scale up food security and no side effects have been reported to date.

Dr Margaret Karembu, the Chairperson of Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB) Kenya Chapter, said Agricultural biotechnology research will help come up with possible solutions to constraints facing agricultural production in Kenya. For instance, she pointed out; climate change related stresses, environment conservation, malnutrition, new plant diseases and animal diseases such as Rift Valley Fever, Bird Flu among others.

"Kenya has made substantial progress towards commercialization of biotech crops with commercialization of Bt cotton scheduled for 2015. To this end, a commercialization task force is already in place to address issues of input supply, awareness creation, operations, distribution and marketing," Dr Karembu explained.

# New maize seed variety introduced in Rift Valley

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

MAIZE farmers in Rift Valley have over the years faced an acute shortage of certified seeds during the planting seasons which, has in most cases forced them to plant unapproved seeds that produce low yields.

But the scenario is likely to change following the development of a new maize seed variety jointly by Migotiyu Plantations Limited and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (Kenri) to help farmers attain greater yields.

According to a marketing manager at Migotiyu Plantations Limited Corien Herweijer, the seed which is set to be introduced in the market in five months time, is resistant to diseases that ravage several acres of maize farmers in Rift Valley. "This variety was developed to offer solution to what has been happening in the last two years in the region. Farmers have lost harvest because of viral diseases," said Herweijer.

Maize farmers have also defied frequent Government's directive to skip a planting season due to diseases that have been destroying the crop in North and South Rift regions.

Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Felix Koskei said the disease – maize lethal necrosis, which surfaced in September 2011 – destroyed 700,000 bags of maize valued at Kshs.2 billion. Migotiyu Ltd's head of seed division Elphas Kiproop said the maize variety dubbed Alphega is expected to produce high yields in medium altitude parts of the country.

"With Kari, we have been carrying out research with the aim of alleviating the suffering that maize farmers have undergone. Food security also remains our priority," said Kiproop.

Currently the Alphega seed has been rolled out in parts of Embu and Mogotio and the yield potential is estimated at 40 bags per acre. Kiproop said the seed is still under trial and will be sampled in different parts of the country for the next six months. "The variety guarantees farmers early maturity and double cobbing with good husk cover and minimal rot during rainy season," said Kiproop.

The seeds KH500-39E can also do well in coffee growing zones in Central, Eastern and Rift Valley, parts of Western, Nyanza and Coast countries. Herweijer said the seed variety will be available for purchase by farmers in the market next January. The seed was unveiled recently at Kabarak University during an agribusines expo attended by more than 80 exhibitors.

"We have already distributed hundreds of free samples to farmers for trial ahead of next year's planting season. This seed variety is disease resistant and we urge farmers to embrace it," said Herweijer.

A 2kg packet of Alphega retails at Ksh340 with a 10 kg bag sold at Ksh1,700. The new variety takes four months to mature. Herweijer said research has been going on since 2003 with the main objective of realizing a food secure country. "Before January, we will carry out demonstrations and follow ups on farmers for the success of the project to be achieved within the shortest period possible," she said.

During the event, East Africa Grain Council chairman Judah arap Bett said it is time farmers commercialise agriculture to realize a hunger-free society.

He said farming remains a prime source of employment to thousands of jobless citizens.

"I appeal especially to the young generation to come out strongly and take positive steps in agri-business," he said during the closing ceremony of the two-day exhibition.

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

## Govt allocates funds to boost livestock production in Migori County

THE government plans to initiate three projects in Migori County in a bid to boost livestock production in the area.

The Principal Secretary in charge of Livestock Dr Khadija Kassachoon says that Miyare Farmers Training Center in Rongo, Oyani Dairy Farm and Lichota Dairy Center will be considered for funding by the central government so as to re-vamp the dying industry in the county.

However, the PS did not specify the amount of money that will be given to the sub-sector for development. She encouraged county governments across the country to also show good will to the dairy industry by setting aside enough cash for the development.

She spoke as dairy farmers in Migori County embarked on a campaign that seeks to popularize the sector amongst the youth. This follows revelations that the youth were shunning the practice in favour of white collar jobs.

Most youth view livestock farming as a means of livelihood for ordinary people, a reason why many of them have shunned the practice.

"The youth must be encouraged to take up agricultural activities particularly livestock farming as a competitive business enterprise rather than solely as a means of livelihood," adds Dr. Khadija.

She notes that livestock farming was vital to addressing food security.

The serious decline in dairy production is expected because it is estimated that at the age of 80, many farmers may not actively engage in major activities of managing their farms.

The PS challenged the youth in Migori County to engage in Dairy farming which remains untapped in the region.

The PS says that the dairy sector in the area is under threat as youth have not been engaged

in farming initiatives that seek to improve livestock production.

The official says that many youth have the wrong perception on livestock farming, which

undermines the true perception about the agricultural practice among the young generation.

An extinction phase is expected when current farmers shall have retired without young

people to replace their activity in the industry. Most do not have someone to inherit their farming activities because most of their children have relocated to urban centres in search of jobs.



Mzee Johnson Odhiambo feeds his cattle.

Photo/File

## Sugarcane farmers hit-out at Kenya Sugar Board

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Kenya Sugar Board is directly responsible for the sugarcane poaching crisis that has nearly crippled the operations of the country's leading sugar producer Mumias Sugar Company and not poor planning. More than 500 sugarcane farmers from Busia and Mumias sugar belts have accused the sugar board director, Billy Wanjala of being part of the sugarcane poaching syndicate that has gripped the multi-billion shillings business in a stranglehold.

The farmers' spokesman, Nicholas Makokha Shikanda said Wanjala who is in charge of Mumias and Busia sugar belts that are the lifeline of Mumias Sugar in cane supplies should explain why sugarcane poaching has for the last two years remained rampant in these two belts.

"We also challenge Wanjala to explain why the Kenya Sugar Board introduced West Kenya Sugar Company to buy cane in these belts when it knew that farmers here are all contracted to Mumias Sugar," said Shikanda, adding that as a KSB director representing these belts he has failed to spearhead a decisive action to be taken against the poachers.

The irate farmers were reacting to reports carried out by a section of the media outlets quoting Wanjala as saying that poor planning and management was responsible for the crisis facing the sugar industry in Busia and Mumias sugar belts.

The Director was also quoted as saying that KSB expected Mumias Sugar to increase sugarcane acreage after releasing Kshs.140 million to boost sugarcane development in the two areas as he welcomed the sacking of the MSC agriculture and factory managers and calling for the assessment of the current Chief Executive Peter Kebati to ascertain his capabilities.

"We know that Wanjala has for years been closely operating with the former agriculture manager, West Kenya Sugar Company and the resulting cane poaching crisis. If there had been poor planning and management, Mumias Sugar could not have invested more than Kshs.3 billion in sugarcane development for the last two years, what is Kshs.140 million compared to three billion?" said Mr. Shikanda.

The farmers at the same time accused Wanjala and the Sugar Board of introducing West Kenya Sugar Company into a territory occupied by farmers contracted to Mumias Sugar, just about the time Mr. Kebati took over management of Mumias Sugar to deliberately sabotage the company's operations.

They challenged Wanjala and the Sugar Board to explain why it had completely failed to stamp out the cane poaching crisis and instead given a go ahead to West Kenya Sugar that does not have contracts for cane supplies with any farmer to build a factory in Busia belt under Mumias when it is not qualified.

The farmers defended Mumias Sugar CEO saying that though he had been at the helm for a short period of time, the restructuring programme he has embarked on at Mumias Sugar was in the right direction, but KSB must put in place its act and take immediate action to stop sugarcane poaching to save the entire industry from total collapse.

## Farmers push for the liberalization of cereals board

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

FARMERS in the North Rift have called for the immediate transformation of the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) into an autonomous body.

The farmers feel that the current status had slowed operations by the board owing to its over-reliance on Government funding. They pointed out that the cereals board has for years been relying on the Government yet it has the capacity to generate money through various business ventures.

Through their representatives, the farmers said apart from storage of cereal produce, the Government should consider empowering NCPB to expand

into other agricultural related ventures.

"The Government should provide a starting capital to the board to help it engage in business to ensure it becomes self-reliant in the near future," suggested Kipkorir Menjo, a Director of Kenya Farmers Association.

He said empowering NCPB would also reduce delays in supply of farm inputs to farmers that has always been witnessed in almost every planting season.

"Every year, the Treasury has been blamed for not releasing funds for purchase of inputs. To solve this problem, NCPB should have its own revenue streams to manage the farm input business," said Menjo.

The director also expressed concern that farmers do not make

much in cereal farming business because the institution has been unable to mop-up grains from them due to inadequate funds from Government.

North Rift NCPB regional manager Jonah Marindich welcomed the farmers' suggestion saying it would help the organization increase its float of cash for streamlining operations.

"We totally agree because when the cereals board has some revolving money it will have a huge turn over thus reducing over-reliance on the Government, which is funding several other institutions", he said.

Marindich, however, said policymakers in the cereal sector are the ones mandated to make recommendations regarding the proposal to Government for con-

sideration and implementation.

He explained that the proposal if implemented, would allow NCPB to purchase produce when the prices are cheaper and dispose off at a profit when prices are favourable as well as have the capacity to export maize to other countries. At the same time, the farmers asked the NCPB to set 50 kg as the standard weight for all agricultural produce.

Mrs. Moira Chepkok, a farmers' representative, said counties should be directed to adopt the 50 kgs packaging saying it is a world packaging standard.

Chepkok cited the World Food Programme (WFP), which she said is buying maize from farmers all over the continent packaged in 50 kgs bags which is the standard weight.

# Crisis at Nzoia Sugar company

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

NZOIA Out grower Company (NOCO) is faced with management crisis, following the suspension of the acting general manger.

Mr. Stanley Wanyonyi was shown the door by the chairman Joash Wamang'oli after he leased and sold a trailer belonging to the company without the approval of the board. In a letter dated 24 June 2013, Wanyonyi was suspended on grounds that he sold the trailer to Sammadel Enterprises without authority from the board of directors.

Wanyonyi replaced Humphrey Mukania early this year, who was also haunted out of office by the chairman. The letter further stated that, Wanyonyi sold the trailer and received Kshs.200.000 in return without notifying the directors.

It says in part, "you are suspended

from duty immediately following the leasing of the trailer and subsequent sale of the same by yourself". Noco has had 7 managers in a span of six years and the high turnover has been blamed on the high handedness and interference by the chairman.

Mr. Wamang'oli who convened a board meeting 4 days after suspending the manager to discuss his fate warned of taking legal action against him. We have enough evidence that the acting General Manager sold the trailer illegally and this could amount to stealing of company's property", he said.

NOCO board of directors allegedly learnt of the illegal sale after a director at Sammadel Enterprises allegedly wrote a letter demanding for receipts of payments and logbook.

The director who gave his name only as Samson, alleges in the letter dated 23 June 2013 that they purchased the trailer at Ksh 200,000

from Wanyonyi and made payments through M-Pesa.

He claims that they were still waiting for the receipts and registration certificates after completing payments. The letter which has no official stamp or letterhead from the firm was the basis used by the chairman as evidence to fire the manager.

On his part, Wanyonyi maintained his innocence by claiming that his removal from office is due to the stand taken to have Wamang'oli removed as a signatory to the company accounts.

The Kenya sugar board was said to be behind the removal of Wamang'oli signature from the company bank accounts before releasing Kshs.35Million loan to buy bell loader, winch and pick-up truck.

He claims that the chairman was interfering with management issues and the matter is subject to investiga-

tion by the Anti- corruption and Ethics commission.

Wamang'oli is accused of firing and replacing the general managers at will to serve his personal interest.

Wanyonyi maintains that the directors were in office illegally as the 2011 elections were fraudulent.

"These directors are in office illegally, as they have even gone further to creating a new electoral zone against the Memorandum of Understanding by the company". He added. He called for the investigation of the directors over what he alleged as pocketing of funds earmarked for mobilization without prove on the ground. He accused them of taking the money without accounting for it, as they have rare interaction with farmers whom they are supposed to serve.

He challenged the directors to sue him over the sale of the trailer insisting that such huge sums of

money cannot be paid through M-Pesa. "Where is the documentation showing the transaction and contract of payment?" he asked. Sources at the company claimed that assets keep on disappearing and those involved get protected by the directors.

The company now has only 5 functioning tractors out of 15 bought in 2009, thanks to vandalism.

Mukania who has served as general manager at the company the longest, said it was not possible to meet farmers expectations with the current crop of directors. He added that tractors have disappeared under mysterious circumstances, yet the board is opposed to investigations that may expose behind the scam.

Rampant theft at the company, forced Wanyonyi to hire a private security firm, to replace company security who collude in stealing.

"I have proof that a certain security officer participates in stealing of company assets, but directors protect him and opposed to any disciplinary action," Wanyonyi complained.

# Group reaps highly in horticultural farming

By BEKADZO TONDO

WHEN 66 residents of Dzikunze location in Ganze district came together to form a group and engage in horticultural farming in the year 2012, most local people dismissed the move as a big joke. Critics said that the group was just wasting their time and energy because they were unlikely to reap anything from the project.

However, the group soldiered on and went ahead to plant horticultural crops. Today the Dzikunze farming community project resonates with success, with the chairlady Mrs. Beatrice Kahindi saying the initiative has helped to improve their livelihoods.

"At first, people tried to discourage us but today we are reaping highly from our hard labour," said Mrs Kahindi. Mrs Kahindi however thanks the government through the national drought management authority which supported them to start off the project.

She said that the authority through the Food for Asset program and with support from the World Food Program dug a water pan at Dzikunze before they could start planting some horticultural crops.

The project secretary Mr Juma Charo said after constructing the water pan, they got 85 acres of land which was donated to them by well-wishers and they started growing the casurina trees for business.

Mr Charo said they also started growing other plants like the passion fruits, piper farming, maize, cassava, maize and cabbage among other horticultural products. The members of the group were recently happy when they received the UK ambassador Mr Neil Briscoe who visited their project and saw what they were doing.

United Kingdom is transforming its strategy in World Food program which previously focused on donating relief food to suffering counties to cash for asset project.

Mr Briscoe said his country through the World Food Program has been concentrating on relief supplies to hunger stricken people in different countries such as Kenya and Somalia over the last twenty years adding that time had come for the program to be transformed to equipping people in the affected areas to get food for

themselves.

Mr Briscoe said the World Food Program is thus being changed to Food for asset program where people are helped to engage infarming activities as a way of enhancing food security.

The envoy who is a permanent representative to the United Nations Food and Agriculture agencies in Rome made the remarks when he paid a courtesy call to the Kilifi county deputy governor Mr Kennedy Kamto and the county executive committee member in charge of agriculture Mr Mwalimu Menza before he inspected a horticultural and forestry project at Mwhera location in Ganze district.

"For the past twenty years, UK has been supplying relief food to hunger stricken families in different countries including Kenya but this time round we want to change the system to enabling people to plant their own food and cash crops to make them self-reliant in food," said Mr Briscoe.

According to the ambassador, UK will be donating funds to enable the people start farming projects and engage in rain water harvesting. Beneficiaries will be paid for the work and later benefit from the proceeds of their farming activities. He said it was advisable for people to learn the art of food production by equipping them with resources and tools to work with.

Mr Briscoe said under the programme, beneficiaries will receive between Ksh 2,500 to Ksh 2740 per month through the cash transfer program. He said the money is being paid through registered financial intermediaries such as Equity Bank where people involved in the project are to open bank accounts to facilitate cash transfer.

According to officials of the program about 59,000 people in Kilifi County were benefiting and they are mostly involved in farming activities and construction of water pans.

The Deputy Governor Mr Kamto thanked UK for their continuous support to famine stricken families in Kilifi County for many years.

However, Mr. Kamto challenged the UK government to empower the people to grow their own food crops instead of the overreliance on relief food.



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By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

## Youth demand accountability from elected leaders

ARTICLE 32 (1) of the constitution provides that, "Every person has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion."

This is one of the fundamental rights and freedoms in the Bill of Rights and other chapters of the constitution that nobody regardless of his/her status in society should be denied.

It was perhaps on the basis of the chapters that guarantee citizens' freedom from unnecessary bondage that prompted youths in Kisumu County to tell their elected leaders that enough is enough.

The youths engaged their elected leaders in a meeting recently where they declared their stand on matters relating to politics and future engage-

ments with politicians.

They told the elected leaders that they no longer want to be bought weapons with which to attack opponents, that they no longer want to be confined to one political party, and that they want to be left to chart their own individual destiny.

This bold move by youths in Kisumu County should be supported by all patriots for the good of this nation because political antagonism and negative ethnicity have for long been promoted by regional political kingpins.

The move taken is also an indication that the youths have since discovered that regional politics have not been of much use to them and

perhaps it is the source of their suffering.

This noble gesture should be emulated by youths in other counties in order to put a stop to the perennial misuse of the youths by politicians and enhance national cohesion and integration.

For instance, youths in Bungoma County have every reason to take the stand their counterparts in Kisumu have taken because they are highly vulnerable to abuse by local politicians.

Electioneering period in the country officially ended on March 2 this year and it is now time for the elected leaders to deliver on their promises to the electorate.

Unfortunately some politicians in Bungoma County still subject local residents to election mood by using hired youths especially during public functions.

During the burial of Timothy Nyongesa in Bungoma town and Timona Masinde in Tongaren, one could easily deduce that the country was just about to hold elections.

Prior to his death, Nyongesa was a prominent businessman in Bungoma town while Masinde was the former Bungoma county council chairman.

Nyongesa was killed in cold blood by criminal gangs while Masinde passed on naturally.

Some politicians who attended the two funerals no doubt hired youths to

escort and applaud them, something that is contrary to the mourning etiquette among the Luhya community.

This practice has been going on for many years now. It is now time the youths stood up to the politicians' manipulation aimed at impoverishing them so that they forever remain at their mercy.

The youths in Bungoma should demand that political leaders come up with policies that are geared towards empowering them economically instead of inciting them against perceived opponents.

They should totally refuse to do things which politicians ask them to do for a fee of Ksh.200 especially when they (politicians) are in a crisis.

## Persons with disabilities cry foul over discrimination

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Director of National Council of Persons with Disabilities Phoebe Nyagudi has lamented that most people with special needs cannot access most buildings in the country.

In a speech read on her behalf by Maureen Wambugu, Nyagudi said that at the moment, most buildings or facilities are not accessible to persons with disabilities which she said is a form of discrimination.

Speaking during an awareness workshop on the accessibility and usability of the built environment at a Nyeri hotel, she said that persons with disabilities are not an interest group nor do they represent subjects for care and protection in Kenya, but they are neighbours and friends in the community who must enjoy all fundamental freedoms.

"For persons with disabilities to get their right to participate on the basis of equality in development, all general systems of society must be accessible," she said. Nyagudi said that that many persons with disabilities are excluded from active participation in society because of barriers such as the way buildings are constructed and designed.

The Director noted that NCPWD has a national action plan on acces-



Some of the participants who attended an awareness workshop on the accessibility and usability of the built environment at a Nyeri hotel recently. Photo/ Joseph Mukubwa

sibility and disability rights which is set to become operational next month.

NCPWD says that if the adjust-

ments are incorporated right from the outset when the buildings are constructed, it benefits all citizens instead

of conducting renovations on those buildings later.

NCPWD says that the organisa-

tion will issue adjustment orders to all public buildings and audit them to ensure they comply with the directive before the provision for the adjustments expires next year. The council is putting on notice all building owners to comply with the adjustment notices pointing out on the specific areas that require adjustments.

Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) Technical Committee Chairman Geoffrey Ndiang'ui said it has adopted an international standard that defines how the built environment should be designed, constructed and managed to enable people with disabilities to access them independently.

The standard provides that building users, architects, designers, engineers, builders, building owners and managers, manufactures, policy makers and legislators have a responsibility to create a sustainable built environment which is accessible.

He said that persons with different disabilities in Kenya have been forgotten in all manner of building designs especially in public buildings.

"We must therefore, as professionals and stakeholders in the building and construction industry find the best solutions to issues that affect all people in the society using set standards," said the KEBS Chairman.

Ndiang'ui said that there is need to incorporate all requirements in the standard in order to make all buildings user-friendly.

## Communities set to benefit from mineral resources

By HENRY OWINO

IN Kenya, 70 percent of land belongs to the community while the remaining 30 percent is shared between public and private land at varied percentages. Recently mineral resources have been discovered in some counties in Kenya and these valuable based resources are in the land held by communities.

The Constitution (Article 66(1)) stipulates that, the State may regulate the use of any land, or any interest in or right over any land, in the interest of defence, public safety, public order, public morality, public health, or land use planning. This therefore means that the government would have to consider the above Article when extraction of these mineral resources starts. For example, oil and gas in Turkana, coal in Kitui, iron ore in Taita Taveta, wind energy in Marsabit, wildlife and titanium in Kajiado and oil in Nyakach, Kisumu county including Ngorongoro in Tanzania the water catchment areas.

The Kenyan Constitution recognizes community rights and requires that benefits accruing from resources on their land are shared with them. It also recognizes the rights of communities to their language and culture and has a robust definition of community that transcends ethnicity and culture to cover 'commu-

nity of interest'.

For mining to take place, some of these communities would be required to move or simply be displaced or reallocated to other areas. The locals must now start processing the vital document and account for the value of their land. However, they are expected to benefit significantly from the excavation before gain is felt in the neighbouring counties. For instance, Turkana, Samburu, Maasai, Taita, Luos among others in these counties are expected to benefit much.

Surprisingly, several people in these communities do not have title deed, which is the most coveted evidence of land ownership in Kenya and any other country. Land is critical to one's citizenship or belonging to a group. Narratives on communities' quest for the recognition and protection of their rights to land and related mineral resources have tended to overshadow the quest for rights by weaker members of the communities especially youth and women.

Governance and management of land is critical to the quest for cohesive nations and democratizing societies. The recently released report by Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), identifies land in Kenya as a major source of disquiet of historical injustices. This must be addressed by the government, TJRC and other relevant

agencies.

The Constitution goes further to provide for equality of community rights with private and public land rights shielding communities from appropriation of their rights by powerful actors within and outside of the community. This allows for the inclusion of land users that have commonly available resources such as wetlands and water sources as part of community.

Realizing community rights in practice however remains a daunting task. For instance, Turkana has been neglected in terms of development by successive governments and now oil has been discovered. Community land rights and land uses must be considered to avoid exclusion of the people as resources are appropriated through rent-seeking and corrupt deals over the newly found wealth.

Another forgotten community is the pastoralists who play a critical role and viable economic activity. Pastoralism has been a neglected land use despite its resilience as viable in many arid and semi-arid areas. It needs to be recognized not delegitimized as mineral resources and their extraction take centre stage.

The history of neglect and abuse has led to the individualization of community land as a defense against percep-

tions that community land is owned by nobody. Even in areas where the suitable land use and cultural norms favour community ownership of land the trend is the same.

This trend needs to be reversed through documentation of norms, land use practices and instances of suitable management of land by communities. While subjecting the former to scrutiny to ensure that they do not offend Constitutional sanctions of non-discrimination, gender equality, stakeholder participation and sustainable development.

According to Prof Patricia Mbote, Professor of Law & Dean School of Law, University of Nairobi, land resources include; minerals, natural forests, wildlife and water. She says that policies and laws on these resources must take community rights into consideration as entitlement not charity from the government. She says devolved and local governments have a role to play to ensure that resources such as wildlife, forests and water are integrated into land rights. "The laws on community land must avert the resource curse where abundance of mineral resources could result in the neglect of other economically viable activities such pastoralism," Prof Mbote cautioned.

Professor of Law said laws on community land can institute mechanisms

for sharing benefits with communities.

Scrutinizing dealings with land after the promulgation of the Constitution in 2010 in Kenya for instance, can help identify instances of irregular and illegal dealings with community land. The investigation should however also open avenues for redress for community members who have had their rights appropriated illegally and irregularly by powerful members of their communities or by non-members of communities in all the three countries; Kenya Uganda and Tanzania.

The Dean, School of Law said institutional structural rigidities are not the best suited to articulate dynamic and living tenets of community rights. She stressed the need to build institutions and strengthen communities especially where customary tenure is concerned.

"It should be recognized that institutions are critical in securing community land rights. Land is a factor of legal, political, social, cultural, religious, physical and intellectual body politic in communities which is dynamic," Prof Mbote revealed.

Prof Mbote stated that dealing with land is one measure of the governments' success and dealing with community land will determine their ability to forge cohesive nations and pave way for more solid regional integration.

## By LINK CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT Uhuru Kenyatta has lifted the curfew imposed by Government in Tana River County last year but warned that punitive measures would be taken should violence flare up again.

The President took the decision following requests by local leaders led by Tana River County Governor Hussein Dado to lift the 6.00 pm to 6.00 am curfew slapped in the area following fighting that claimed over 200 lives in the county.

"I am committed to working with local leaders to bring peace in this area.

I will lift the curfew as requested by your Governor but stern action will be taken against anyone who will instigate a recurrence of violence," the President said.

The President was speaking in Hola town when he addressed wananchi during a public meeting meant to launch issuance of title deeds in the area. The title deeds issuance in Tana River County will be undertaken once genuine land owners are established and security issues addressed.

President Kenyatta called on leaders and wananchi to co-exist and uphold peace in order to cultivate a conducive environment for development.

"Leaders should always work towards uniting all the communities and maintain peace. We all have a responsibility of ensuring pastoralists and farmers co-exist peacefully and carry out their economic activities unhindered," he said.

The President said continued conflicts in the Tana Delta area would retard development and strongly appealed to leaders to embrace amicable ways of resolving disputes.

"Nothing is possible if there is no peace. We cannot create wealth if there is fighting between communities. Not even surveying can take

# President Kenyatta lifts Tana River curfew

place.

So let's live together peacefully," the President said.

Governor Dado said that a few unscrupulous rich people bent on enriching themselves through speculation had irregularly acquired between 60,000 and 100,000 acres of land in the County.

The President clarified that genuine investors in the irrigation and other sectors who had acquired land procedurally will not be affected by cancellation of the title deeds.

"Any fake title deeds must be revoked and the allocation process

repeated to ensure only genuine land owners get their right," the President said.

He continued: "This is not to say we do not want investors. What we do not want are backdoor activities for land speculation. We encourage all investors to come to Kenya to do business but we do not want corruption," said President Kenyatta.

President Kenyatta said the Government would spend Kshs 200 million to modernize Hola District Hospital to enable it provide adequate healthcare services to residents.

Deputy President William Ruto

said the Government would not allow unscrupulous people to hoard land for speculative purposes.

The Deputy President said the Government has set aside Kshs 30 million for the construction of an Information and Communication Technology institute in Garsen which will also comprise a teachers training college requested by local leaders.

He echoed the President's sentiments that wananchi and leaders should uphold peace, noting that the Government issued title deeds in Kilifi, Mombasa and Lamu Counties without any hitches.



President Uhuru Kenyatta with Kilifi Governor Amoson Kingi hold a title deed for residents of counties in Coast region during the launch of the distribution exercise at State House, Mombasa.

## Homa Bay County leads in HIV infections

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

Homa Bay County has the highest HIV infections in the country.

According to a joint research by the National Aids Control Council (NACC) HIV/Aids and the National Aids and STIs Control Programme, the prevalence rate in the county stands at 27.1 per cent.

By the end of 2011 Homa Bay had 150,000 people living with HIV, where 85 per cent were adults.

The research indicates that women are leading in HIV infections compared to their male counterparts. It shows that 10,000 of the 40,000 women who become pregnant every year in the country are HIV positive.

The county had 8,268 new HIV infections among adults in 2011.

The NACC Director Alloys Orago also said the national HIV/Aids prevalence stands at 6.2 per cent, and at the end of 2011, 1.6 million Kenyans were living with HIV.

Prof Orago attributed the high prevalence rate in Homa Bay to social cultural practices and advised the residents to discard the same.

He called on the residents to change their behaviour as one of the modalities of combating the scourge.

"Time has come when we have to chart the way forward to combat the infection rates. I call upon leaders to join hands in sensitising residents on behavioural change in this area," he said.

Homa Bay Governor Cyprian Awiti, who officially opened a sensitisation drive, assured residents he would set aside a special kitty in his budget to help fight the pandemic.

Awiti said the county cannot realise the UN Millennium Development Goals if the rate of HIV and Aids remained that high.

"It is very unfortunate we are leading in a negative side as far as HIV infections are concerned. We have to come out as leaders to ensure the scourge is reduced because no county can be productive if its populace is ailing," Awiti added.

Awiti's deputy Hamilton Orata warned the situation would scare investors if proper measures were not taken in good time.

"Every investor coming to this county asks for resources and labour. It is unfortunate the majority of the people dying are young people who can provide labour for various economic activities," Orata observed.

## Squatter invasion derails KAA expansion plans

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

EFFORTS by the Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) to expand the Voi airstrip in Taita-Taveta County have been thwarted by squatter invasion.

Local leaders now want the squatters to vacate the site to pave way for the expansion exercise.

The leaders who included Senator Dan Mwazo, MPs Joyce Wanjala Lay, Thomas Mwachugu, Jones Mlolwa, Andrew Mwachugu and Governor John Mruttu decried the squatter's menace saying it was a major

hindrance to economic development and should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

"The KAA wants to expand the airstrip but the exercise has been halted until the squatters vacate site," said Mr. Mwachugu.

The MP said the expansion programme would not only create job opportunities to the local community but also improve tourism activities in the county.

"The airstrip is strategically situated along the busy Nairobi-Mombasa

highway and adjacent to the expansive Tsavo National Park. The number of tourists is expected to increase if the facility is rehabilitated and expanded as many flights will prefer landing there," said Mwachugu.

Mruttu announced ambitious plans to create more investments and business opportunities in Voi Central Business District (CBD) to help create more jobs for the locals.

He said plans were at an advanced stage to implement a street lighting project in the CBD to enhance secu-

urity for economic growth.

The Governor said that apart from implementing the street lighting project, his administration would also expand the town to attract more investment.

Mruttu, however, noted that insecurity coupled with poor roads and water infrastructure was hampering investment and economic growth of the county. He at the same time told the contractor awarded the tender to rehabilitate the dilapidated Mwatate-Taveta road to give jobs to more locals.

## County bans felling of cashew nut trees

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Kilifi County government has outlawed the felling of cashew nut trees to aid in fuel production in factories and industries.

Governor Amoson Kingi decried the rate at which factories were felling cashew nut and mango trees for fuel production.

Mr. Kingi said his government was against the practice and warned that any investor found felling the trees would be dealt with.

Speaking at a public baraza at Bungale in Magarini District, Mr.

Kingi said his government would work with the office of the National Environment and Management Authority (Nema) to deal with investors who interfere with the environment in this way.

"It is shocking to see huge lorries carrying wood obtained from cash crops like cashew nut and mango trees to be used as fuel. This trend will not be tolerated," said Mr. Kingi.

The Governor said Nema, which is in charge of protecting the environment, must stand firm and ensure the forest cover is not endangered.

He said most factories and indus-

try operations have moved to wood as a source of fuel, adding that the cutting down of trees would endanger the environment.

Mr. Kingi noted that salt harvesting and processing firms at Gongoni have been using wood as fuel to process their products. He said other industries in Mombasa and Mtwapa are also using the wood as fuel in their industries adding that his government would not allow it to continue.

Mr. Kingi's remarks follows complaints by residents over the widespread cutting down of trees for fuel use. Most of the residents claimed that

some people had been hired by factory and industry operators to go into the rural areas and buy the trees, which are then used as fuel.

One resident, Joseph Kadzomba, said the agents were paying as little as Kshs.500 to cut down a productive cashew nut tree and make logs, which are later taken to the factories.

"As villagers we are concerned that our areas are almost being turned into deserts following the massive cutting down of cash trees like mango and cashew nut for use as fuel in most industries and factories in the Coast region," said Mr. Kadzomba.

By PETER MUTUKU

eLIMU founder Nivi Mukherjee says it will take more than the incoming Jubilee government's promise to provide free laptops to primary school children to improve education standards in Kenya.

Mukherjee, whose award-winning eLimu startup provides educational content, has been involved in the provision of laptops to schools and believes lifting educational standards will require more than just the devices given the number of unforeseen challenges.

She said provision of electricity, internet and training of teaching staff could prove challenges to Uhuru Kenyatta's ambitions, while also questioning the wisdom of trying to provide every student with an individual laptop.

According to Mukherjee, research has shown children tend to learn better and faster in groups, as demonstrated by the 'Hole in the Wall experiment' by Sugata Mitra.

Above all, she believes it is unwise for the government to buy laptops as the world moves towards tablets, which are cheap, energy conserving and more portable.

"With tablets it is much easier to work out a cheaper deal given the economies of scale the country is likely to benefit from, with various countries such as India and China likely to offer competitive prices," she said.

eLimu is currently acquiring tablets for as low as US\$100 with laptops expected to cost more.

Apart from problems arising from the hardware, Mukherjee argues the government is yet to create an e-learning curriculum based on changing times, with the

## Kenya's education sector will need more than just laptops

curriculum in use having last been updated more than 30 years ago.

She admits it might take years before the government comes up with an e-learning curriculum, though she urged the Ministry of Education to team up with the private sector and organisations such as eLimu, who have a ready curriculum that incorporates the 8-4-4 system.

"In our platform we have all the six subjects being examined by the KCPE as well as additional courses in life such as financial literacy, human rights, environment

and many others that we have been giving to schools," she said.

As to whether the devices will boost education standards, she said recent pilots conducted by her organisation saw a school they have been piloting emerge as the best performing school in the Dagoretti area.

She says with sober discussions among the experts and the crafting of a strategy paper the exercise is bound to succeed.

Currently her organisation, which recently benefitted from an investment of US\$100,000,

is strengthening the its platform to allow it to accommodate over 100,000 student user accounts, having completed its pilot projects in Nairobi and Busia.

eLimu says it has witnessed increasing interest in Kenya's education sector since Mukherjee was selected by the Capital City African-American Chamber of Commerce (CCAACC) to represent the continent at this year's South by South West (SXSW), a major emerging technologies event in the United States, making her and Simeon Oriko



Set of computers. Education sector needs more than just laptops.

## EACC moves to reclaim port land from private developer

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

CONTROVERSY is brewing over a piece of land reclaimed from the sea more than 20 years ago for the expansion of Kilindini Harbour in Mombasa.

The land has allegedly been grabbed by a private developer and according reliable sources, the land in question was allegedly grabbed in 1998, ten years after the plot had been reclaimed from the sea and handed over to the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA), which owns the harbour.

African Marine and General Engineering Company, which occupies part of the plot and uses it to repair ships, reclaimed the piece of land for KPA between 1988 and 1998.

But according to court papers, after the reclamation someone was allocated the property on a 99-year lease. The developer, subsequently, subdivided the plot into two in October and November last year and was issued with land titles.

However, to the surprise of the developer, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) has challenged the lease to one Boniface Katana Kaliveri saying the transfers were illegal and a threat to security of ships docking and leaving the port of Mombasa.

"The said land is under imminent threat after Mr. Katana forcefully settled at the site and started putting up permanent structures," says Allan Mola, an investigator with EACC in a sworn affidavit of June 27, this year. Now the High court in Mombasa has stopped the private developer from developing a commercial building on the peace of land.

Recently, Justice Samuel Mukunya gave the orders following an application made by Mr. Mola, an advocate with EACC who is complaining that the developer is posing danger to the port activities.

The judge barred Mr. Katana from disposing or transferring the plot to any other entity until the matter was heard and determined by the court.

The order comes in the wake of claims that some unscrupulous people were alienating KPA land and putting up private structures thus exposing the shipping lanes to insecurity including sea terrorism.

Mr. Mola told Justice Mukunya that the land in question was leased to African Marine and General Engineering Company by KPA in January, 1990.

He further informed the judge that investigation reveals that on January 1, 1998, Mr. Katana was illegally allocated the said plot, which belongs to KPA. Mr. Mola says the parcel of land, which is adjacent to a separate KPA plot, was reclaimed from the sea by the company to create the berthing of sea going vessels on terms, which had been agreed with KPA.

The investigator explains that EACC moved to court to institute civil proceedings against the developer and recover it.

## Women prepare for the 2015 post development agenda

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

LACK of access to land by women has been identified as a serious issue that must be addressed by governments as the 2015 deadline for realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches.

Women's access to land is still limited by retrogressive cultural practices, family and marital laws.

The situation has further been compounded by private investments and policies that promote large scale land acquisitions or land grabbing by transnational corporations which hinder the achievement of women's rights and gender equality.

A two day strategic meeting dubbed "towards the realization of women's rights and gender equality: Post 2015 sustainable development," heard that women were still grappling with limited access to property rights which denied them land benefits and critical resources such as water and food.

The meeting which was held at the Florham Park, New Jersey, USA was convened by the center for Women's Global Leadership

(WGL).

The meeting brought together women's rights advocates, economic and social rights experts and human rights lawyers working from a feminist perspective from all over the world.

The meeting sought to identify priorities for the realization of women's rights and gender equality within the contest of micro-economic policy. Participants also selected and developed key messages for selected priorities and strategies.

They were of the view that economic policies played a critical role in the realization of women's rights.

"Without understanding economic policies, we cannot holistically respond to inequality at a systematic level or relate to women's rights and gender equality," the report says.

Other areas of concern were said to be the extractive sector which can increase inequality due to lack of transparency and little oversight.

It notes that extractive industries often displace communities

without accountability and the displacement impacts negatively on women.

"Social security thus calls for reforms and expansion of both formal and informal sectors as a basic social service and protection," reads the report in part.

The report urges the government to re-think budgets to shift from cutting social spending to decreasing resource allocation to the military.

Access to equality and affordable health care are determined by government allocations which impact on women's decisions about their lives and bodies.

On trade policies, they observed that both bilateral & multilateral agreements on intellectual property and agricultural subsidies must be woven into women's rights and gender equality.

This was largely attributed to the fact that trade agreements directly affect the cost and availability of pharmaceutical products.

Furthermore trade liberalization increases competitive pressures and labor cost in ways that undermine decent work thereby

increasing economic insecurity.

Participants committed themselves to incorporate the resolutions at the meeting to their respective organizations.

They agreed to enhance understanding on financing for climate change, sharing instructions, host informal social meet-ups for women to discuss leadership economic policies, economic Justice and integrate this policy in the advocacy messages.

The meeting noted that capacity building in economic literacy and rights is a necessity.

The responsibility of feminist and women right groups is to amplify the ways in which economic policies and lack of corporate accountability affect negatively the lives of both men & women.

The meeting comes as the 2015 deadline for realizing the Millennium Development Goals fast approaches.

Women view this as an important moment to influence the process and advocate for the inclusion of a language that promotes the realization of women's rights and gender equality.

## Govt committed to ensure Kenyans own land, says Uhuru

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE Government will ensure that all Kenyans who have no title deeds are issued with the document in order to engage in meaningful economic activities.

President Uhuru Kenyatta said land is an important factor of production that should not be politicized adding that his Government has embarked on a country-wide programme to issue title deeds to Kenyans.

Speaking at State House, Mombasa, when he launched the programme in the coastal region where 60,000 title deeds were issued to the area residents, the President noted that land plays a key role in economic development in the country.

"Giving the title deeds to citizens imply that we have empowered the individuals and their families economically," President Kenyatta noted.

He said the Jubilee Government is determined to resolve land problems not only in the coastal region but in the country as a whole.

President Kenyatta noted that Kenyans have for a long time pre-occupied themselves with the land question saying that the time has come for the land answer.

Said the President, "This is why we need to move from issue of land question to land answer so that we can truly begin the pace of rapid economic growth and development in our nation."

The Head of State underlined the need for all stakeholders to work together in streamlining land ownership in the country.

The President, who was accompanied by elected leaders from the coastal region, said the issuance of title deeds in the area will be done in a transparent manner in order to ensure that only deserving cases are considered.

"We will have regular consultations to ensure everyone is brought on board in a transparent and accountable process to ensure only deserving cases are considered," President Kenyatta said.

He, however, observed that such a programme is not immune to hitches and urged all leaders to engage in dialogue in resolving challenges when they arise instead of trading accusations.

Speaking during the occasion Deputy President William Ruto said the launch of the programme in the region marks a milestone in resolving land problems in the coast region.

Coastal region leaders led by their governors assured the President of their commitment and support to the Government in ensuring the programme succeeds.

They said former regimes had failed to resolve the matter and thanked President Kenyatta for initiating the move to ensure the area residents legally own their land.

Meanwhile, President Uhuru Kenyatta has ordered a complete audit of land records to root out irregularities in land transactions.

The President put corrupt lands officials on notice, saying no one will be allowed to derail pledges the Jubilee Coalition made to Kenyans, particularly in addressing the land problem.

"We are committed to fulfilling the pledges we made to Kenyans. Addressing the land problem in the country is a step towards achieving that goal," the President said.

President Kenyatta spoke in Pate island, Lamu County where he issued over 2,000 title deeds to residents.

The President emphasized that land officials should stop allocating land to themselves and their cronies illegally, warning that

those found to have engaged in irregularities will be disciplined. He directed civil servants to embrace change in line with the Government's transformative agenda or risk losing their jobs.

"The proverbial 40 days are over for lands officials who have been a stumbling block to conclusion of land adjudication in various parts of the country," the President said.

The Head of State welcomed investors to the country but emphasized that legal means should be used in acquiring land.

He informed those receiving title deeds that all fees had been met by the Government and urged them to use the documents to obtain loans that will transform their lives.

"This will empower individuals and families and advance the Government's agenda of eradicating poverty and growing the economy," the President said.

Responding to requests by local leaders, President Kenyatta assured Kenyans that the Government was computerizing all land records to improve on efficiency. He disclosed that Government intends to issue 3 million title deeds to Kenyans in the next five years.

On the LAPSSET project, the President said Government has set aside Kshs 20 million to train 1,000 youth in Lamu County who

will be employed in the project. He said his Government will ensure a Lamu County representative is included in the LAPSSET Board when constituted.

On education, President Kenyatta said 100 more teachers will be recruited from Lamu County to ease the existing understaffing. He told parents in Lamu and other counties in the Coast region to educate their children to prepare them for managerial positions.

He said Lamu Hospital, which was in a deplorable state, would benefit from Kshs 200 million as part of the grant pledged by the Chinese Government during his recent State visit.

Deputy President William Ruto said the Government was working hard to correct past injustices in land transactions where influential personalities irregularly acquired large tracts of land at the expense of ordinary Kenyans.

The Deputy President said it was unacceptable that less than 100 wealthy people shared out 1 million acres of land while ordinary citizens, who are the majority, only owned less than two acres each.

Local leaders led by Lamu Governor Issa Timamy and area MP Shariff Athman assured the President that Lamu residents fully supported the LAPSSET project which would open up the area to investors.



Ms Charity Ngilu, Cabinet Secretary, Lands with other leaders in Mombasa recently. She was attacked by some Coast MPs over Waitiki farm visit.

## Suspected witches die after botched ritual in Kikambala

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

A PLANNED ritual to exorcise three elderly men accused of practicing sorcery turned tragic after they died while a pastor tried to cleanse them of witchcraft.

The pastor allegedly forced them to pass through separate homes in Kikambala, Kilifi County and drink highly salted water.

The pastor who has claimed to possess powers to detect and exorcise witches is now on the run.

A senior administrative officer in Kikambala division who declined to be named confirmed the three deaths indicating two were from the same family.

The official said elderly family members from Su and Sand area in Kikambala were forcibly taken to the pastor for the exorcism by family members after they were accused of bewitching a young girl who drowned in the Indian Ocean.

Recently, Bahari OCPD Justine Nyaga said he had received report of only one death, that of a man who is said to have died recently after he was forced to take the highly concentrated salty water by the pastor.

Speaking to *The Link*, Mr. Nyaga said though the report was made, police search teams have been unable to locate the body of the dead man. "What we are hearing is just a rumour as nobody has come out to make an official report out to make an official report concerning the mysterious deaths, and efforts by my officers to get even the bodies have proved difficult," said Mr. Nyaga. But independent sources within the police indicated that two men from the same home died recently and were secretly buried.

And a pastor from Kikambala Gilbert Mwanganda confirmed that the pastor (name withheld) has been claiming to have powers to cleanse witches and wizards using salty water. He said an association of pastors had written to the District Officer complaining about the exorcism rituals.

Pastor Mwanganda claimed that the runaway pastor forces his victims to gobble up the concentrated liquid containing a kilogramme of salt mixed with some water after shaving their heads.

## KNUT calls for more funding of education sector

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

SCHOOLS reopen for the third term this month with calls to the Government to increase funding to the sector.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) notes that the Ksh15.2 billion earmarked for the education sector was insufficient adding that key areas were not factored in.

Union's national officials Wilson Sossion (National Chairman), Mudzo Nzili (Acting Secretary general) and Paul Mutisya (National treasurer) lashed at the Government for reneging on its promise to employ 40,000 primary and secondary school teachers every year and 24,000 ECDE teachers.

They also petitioned the Government to set aside monies for training teachers on ICT skills ahead of the introduction of free laptops for Standard One pupils beginning next year.

"The Government should be alive

to the fact that Kenyan teachers are ill prepared to handle Standard One pupils come next year. A comprehensive training program on ICT should therefore be rolled out with an immediate effect," said Nzili. He spoke as it emerged that more pupils in Nairobi have embraced ICT and were spending more time on social media.

A spot check on cybercafé reveals that they form a significant percentage of customers and spend the whole day playing computer games. Attendants reveal that most parents pay for them to play computer games to keep them occupied. "A few have computers at home, so they remain indoors all day playing. Majority who do not have computers go to cybercafés. During holidays and weekends, children make up the bulk of daily customers," she reveals.

Although allowing children to use gadgets such as computers, ipads and mobile phones to play games can help

keep the children busy during holidays, it can lead to addiction and eye problems due to exposure to the brightly-lit computer screens.

Apart from the holidays leaving parents at a loss over how to keep the children occupied, the vacations also come with huge financial implications. Merciline Wangare, a single mother, says she can barely make ends meet and school holidays make matters even worse.

"If I had a way in this issue, I would prefer the holidays to be shortened. I spend more money during holidays when my three children are at home and I find it burdensome for someone like me who is struggling financially. I would prefer a one-week holiday, at most ten days. That is enough time for them to rest," adds Wangare, a green grocer.

But Goretta Muthoni says children should be given ample time to rest.

Experts say children should be involved in exciting activities during

holidays such as park tours, swimming, camping and visiting relatives.

James Muiruri, a sports instructor and motivator, has run holiday camps for children for 15 years and says they add value to well-being of students.

"After working so hard in school, even children need rest. That is why I came up with the idea of a sports camp. We use sports to expose children to different environments to encourage holistic development." He says.

Muiruri runs the Swim Africa Sports Camp where children from different schools in Kenya and foreign schools participate in various sports, including water sports, soccer, cycling, motor sports and many others.

The role of sports cannot be underestimated. Cycling instils endurance and helps them acquire body balance and gain confidence. During the holidays, we set them up in schools in the leafy parts of western Nairobi, away from all

forms of distractions or noise. A sports camp is an excellent way of keeping them occupied, as opposed to playing computer games and watching television all day." "The parents leave them with us and they either pick them later or we take them home. It is a complete separation with their parents and books, says Muiruri.

Muiruri has just returned from England, where he had taken holidaying children to participate in an international sports tournament. He says that apart from meeting and making friends with children from other parts of the world, the kids also toured famous spots, including Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United, Buckingham Palace and other famous historic sites.

"It is a great opportunity to get out and see the world. The trips expose them to the outside world and they get to make new friends and have fun," he said.

## What to know about the County Integrated Development Plan

### By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE planning process is an integral part of the development process. It is the first critical stage of the budget process. The budgeting process provides that every county shall prepare a development plan in accordance with Article 220(2) of the Constitution of Kenya for approval by the county assembly. The county executive committee member responsible for planning shall submit the development plan before the county assembly by 1st September. The development plan will inform the budget priorities for the coming year.

The County Governments Act, 2012 (CGA), 104 obligates a county to develop an integrated plan, designate planning units' at all county administrative levels and promote public participation and engagement by non state actors in the planning process. The county plans shall consist of the following;

The County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) is a 5 year plan that shall inform the county's annual budget;

**County Sectoral Plan (10 year plan)**  
County Spatial Plan is a 10 year plan using the Geographic Information System (GIS) based system and will be reviewed every 5 years;

#### City and municipal plans

The CIDP shall reflect the strategic midterm priorities of the county governments. The CIDP will contain specific goals and objectives, a coasted implementation plan, provisions for monitoring and evaluation and clear reporting mechanisms. It will contain information on investments, projects, development initiatives, maps, statistics, and a resource mobilization

framework.

The Ministry of Planning issued CIDP planning guidelines in May 2013 and the process is underway in most counties.

#### Role of the public in the County planning process

Citizen participation is mandatory in the planning process. CGA, 106(4) states "county planning shall provide for citizen participation" and shall be done in a process that "involves meaningful engagement of citizens" (CGA, 105(1-d)). Public participation shall be facilitated through:-

#### (a) The County Budget and Economic Forum (CB&EF)

(PFM 137) provides that a county government shall establish the CB&EF.

It shall comprise the Governor and members of the county executive committee, an equal number of nominees of Non State Actors (NSA) (professionals, business, labour, women, persons with disabilities, elderly and faith based groups at county level). The forum shall provide a means of consultation on the planning budgeting, economic and financial management processes in the county.

#### (b) County Citizen Engagement Framework

(CGA Part VIII) obligates the county government to establish structures for citizen participation. These are guided by principles set out in CGA87.

#### (c) County Communication Plat-

#### form and Strategy

(CGA Part IX) obligates the county government to integrate communication in all its development activities, observe Article 35 through access to information. The county government is required to establish an effective communication and sensitisation framework using various media forms, targeted at widest selection of stakeholders in the county.

#### (d) County Civic Education Strategy

(CGA Part X) requires the county government to develop an effective civic education framework through which it shall empower and enlighten citizens and promote the principles of devolution in the constitution on a

continual basis.

(e) (CGA 92(2)) The Governor shall submit an annual report to the county assembly on the status of citizen participation in the affairs of the county government.

#### Practical Steps County Governments need to take

- (a) Provide a meeting timetable of planning forums with sufficient notice to enable active public engagement;
- (b) Provide a meeting agenda informing the expected inputs from members of the public;
- (c) Work with NSA's, CSO's and county based media in the county to raise awareness of the county planning agenda, dates and times;
- (d) Use an effective communication strategy such as mainstream and community media, social media, and NSA networks;
- (e) Keep the process accountable by maintaining a record of public submissions, providing timely updates on the process, ensuring access to planning documents to stakeholders at all stages of the process.

#### Role of Civil Society Organisations in the County Planning process

1. **Awareness:** Use your networks to sensitize the public on the process and encourage citizens engage in the process;
2. **Support the process:** work with the county government to make the process a success through cash or kind collaboration;
3. **Keep the process accountable:** Take steps to ensure the county government has made the process participatory and open as required by the constitution and county legislation.



People gaze the ruins of structures demolished by Garissa County authorities along Kismayo Road recently. County officials said they had issued a one-month notice to vacate.

## Urban farmers embrace bag gardening technology

### By HENRY OWINO

A KENYAN firm has introduced bags made from an ultra-violet inhibiting material that protects plants from sun rays and have a 10-year life span.

The bag/sack gardening also known as vertical farms or gardens are ideal in areas prone to natural disasters such as floods or mud slides

where there is no enough ground-level sunlight to grow vegetables.

Farmers in areas where drought is common or water is very limited and unemployment rates can also benefit from the initiative.

The urban dwellers in Kenya can therefore grow vegetables and other fresh produce in their backyard and harvest it over 10 times compared to open farming thanks to a bag garden-

ing technology.

The technology, which is an improvement of the old maize sack bags to ultra-violet bags, is quickly gaining popularity among urban dwellers. This has also been contributed to the harsh economic times many urban dwellers are experiencing in food prices.

"These bags are made from an ultra-violet (UV) inhibiting material that protects the tender plants from damaging sun rays. This UV material gives the bag a 10 year lifespan compared to the common sacks that only last for about three months," said Harry Day a programme officer at Real Impact, the technology's pioneers.

Day said the bags are improved to ensure high yields since the plants do not compete for the nutrients. The bags are easy to use and come with instructions. They are sold in different sizes which determine the number of plants that can be accommodated. For instance, a medium sized bag can hold about 60 plants and it is sold at Ksh 800 while an 80 plant bag goes for Ksh 100.

One does not need to make holes

as they are already there and what is needed is soil, compost and seedlings of the desired crop. Mixing the soil and the compost on a fifty-fifty basis then pouring the mixture in the bag and that's all.

Day advised that this mixture in the bag should be monitored a few days to ensure that it is firm and compacts together so that it can hold the plants when planted. The seedlings are then transplanted into the holes from outside and proper crop management like spraying of pesticides should be observed for better results.

The plants are also irrigated and this is done from the top as water permeates through to the bottom. The beauty about this technology is that it can be practiced by anyone including those with disabilities. It is not labour intensive and is easy to monitor as it can be done in one's backyard.

Weeding is also reduced since the only openings in the bag which permits a plant growth is where the crops are planted. In addition, one does not get tired from bending while harvesting since the plants are in a raised bag.

Day said that the bags support vegetables like kales, cabbage, carrots, amaranth among others. The bags promise high returns with the medium size able to give a farmer over three kilogrammes of vegetables per week for 16 week period. Further still, the bag has over 10 year shell- life which ensures that one gets maximum output from each garden bag.

"The bag can be used for over 10 year and to re-plant in the bag, one only needs to replace the soil and compost and it is good to go," Day said.

Although the countrywide roll out of the bags has not yet been done, the bags demand has increased and Real Impact has made inroads into other parts of the country apart from Thika.

With the dwindling size of arable land due to urbanization, the adoption of garden bags may offer a solution to hundreds of thousands of urban dwellers who are increasingly turning to farming for subsistence and business.



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